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Kent on Sunday

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East edition No 748

EDUCATION

Sixth form row over league tables

Do schools drop students to boost their rankings?

ENVIRONMENT

Fatal tree disease threat spreads

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HISTORY

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Why league position must not warp school system

WHILE being critical of our education system has become something of a national sport, the pressure schools are increasingly under is often something to behold.

In recent years budgets have been slashed, teacher numbers plunged and workloads rocketed.

But, more significantly, it has become the archetypal political football – given a fresh kick by every education secretary with goalposts constantly on the move.

The temptation is, of course, all too great. Everyone has a theory about how our children should be taught and what is most important. Is there any greater power than altering the focus of an entire generation as they progress through their most formative years?

Yet try and remember a mere five years without some significant changes to methods or process and you



Editor **Chris Britcher**

will be struggling. Schools are caught in a permanent typhoon of ideology, ambition and ego.

The introduction of league tables in 1992 was not, in principle, a bad idea. Parents should be able to gauge the success, or otherwise, of schools in their areas, plus act as a spur to improve. But the reality is they have become like TripAdvisor. See a poor score and you'll not entertain the idea of sending your child there. And that further corrupts an already fractured selective school system in this county.

And as our story inside reveals, the long held suspicion that some schools are so desperate to do well the good of the student is being overlooked in pursuit of strong ratings should set off some significant alarm bells.

The results may not be seen today, or tomorrow, but at some point in the future we will live to regret the pressure applied.

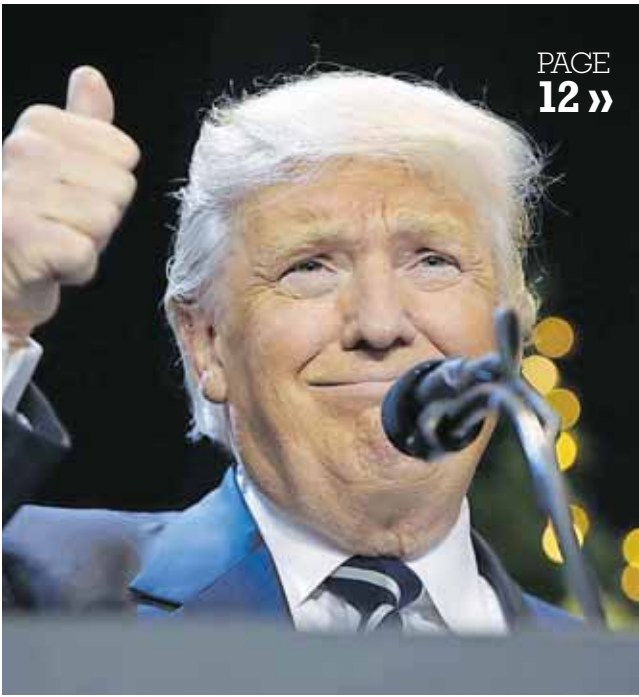
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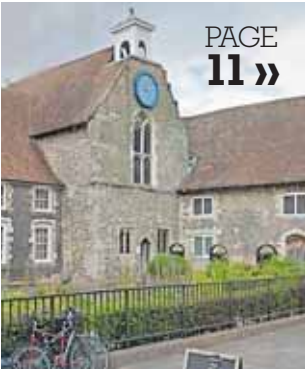
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‘Brave’ 15% council tax hike, but it’s not for us

By Tom Pyman

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A PROPOSED 15 per cent council tax hike in Surrey will not be making its way across the south east to Kent and Medway, local authority chiefs have promised.

After the nearby authority announced it was calling a referendum to propose the increase in a desperate attempt to pay for the growing crisis in social care, fears grew that other cash-strapped councils would see it as an opportunity to generate a similar move of their own.

If an authority wishes to increase its council tax by more than 1.99 per cent – plus an additional three per cent specifically designated for social care – it must hold a public vote.

However, as Kent County Council is set to give the green light to a council tax rise of just under four per cent early next month at its annual budget meeting, leader Paul Carter insists shrewd calculations by his authority in recent years have prevented the need for such a drastic plan.

“There will be no such thing in



SENSIBLE: County Hall in Maidstone, home of Kent County Council

Kent because we’ve put together a sensible and intelligent budget.” Cllr Carter told KoS. “I don’t know what Surrey’s particular circumstances are but when Kent has faced like-for-like reductions in funding of 36 per cent over the last five years, it’s incredible what we’ve done.

“We don’t like putting council tax up, but 3.99 per cent is fair and reasonable.

Possible solutions mooted by Cllr

Carter, who also leads the County Councils Network, included re-allocation of some of the government’s foreign aid budget towards social care and the introduction of an insurance industry product, “attractive for families” that insures against high social care costs.

His Conservative counterpart in Medway, Alan Jarrett, praised council chiefs in Surrey for being “brave” but also insisted his authority would not

table such a hike.

Cllr Jarrett told us: “What Surrey are doing is reflecting the state of finances at councils across the country, where there is simply not enough for adult social care, and they’ve been brave enough to make this move.

“While I don’t see it happening in Medway, government should scrap their capping on council tax increases and allow local authorities the flexibility.”

Tanks in secret show of force in overnight Channel Tunnel move

A TOP secret operation to test whether the army can quickly move tanks and armoured vehicles to Europe by rail in case of a crisis successfully took place in Kent this week.

Forces moved a total of five vehicles – a Challenger 2 tank, a Warrior fighting vehicle, a reconnaissance vehicle, a tank recovery vehicle and a Warrior recovery vehicle – through the Channel Tunnel for the first time, before returning back to Folkestone early on Wednesday morning.

Ministry of Defence chiefs wanted to keep the drill low-key as it tested whether the vehicles of ranging shapes and sizes could be swiftly moved through the tunnel for the first time in an exercise that has been in the planning since last February.

However, it raised attention of the exercise in a tweet sent late on Tuesday night in a warning of their presence to locals.

Equipment is regularly moved through the tunnel and while 70-tonne vehicles have been

transported across the Channel on ferries and by air, this was the first time it had been done by rail.

The army has its own railway line that joins up with the national network, but uses a private contractor, Leidos, for specific movement through the Channel Tunnel.

New ways to deploy armour from the UK are being sought ahead of the army’s withdrawal from bases in Germany by 2021, when the UK will have no large, permanent force in mainland Europe.

However, it is understood the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment, which has an area headquarters in Canterbury, is leading Nato’s Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, designed to respond rapidly to potential crises on the continent.

A spokesperson for the MOD said: “The Army successfully conducted an exercise to test the viability of using the Channel Tunnel to move vehicles and equipment to mainland Europe.”

Rare movie poster collection sells for £60,000 at auction

A RARE original movie poster for HG Wells’ classic War of the Worlds has sold for £18,000 at an auction this week.

It was part of a collection of 230 posters put up for sale by the widow of a film fanatic from Folkestone. In total she raised £60,000 – money she intends to use to move from her Kent home to be closer to her grandchildren.

Other top sales included £7,600 for a 1956 Forbidden Planet poster, £5,600 for one advertising the very first James Bond movie, Dr No, and £3,500 for Steve McQueen classic The Great Escape, from 1963.

Collector Brian O’Connor, died last May aged 71. He started his collection when he served in the Army in the 1950s and was helping out at armed forces cinemas.

Nearly 100 charged during festive drink-drive campaign

POLICE say 125 people were arrested during its Christmas drink-driving crackdown.

During December, officers across Kent arrested a total of 113 people for either driving in excess of the prescribed limit, or being in charge of a motor vehicle while in excess of the prescribed limit; some 12 others on suspicion of driving whilst unfit through drink.

In total 99 have so far been charged.

Inspector Sam Pearson said: “People can be killed or seriously injured as a result of the inconsiderate actions of those who think it is acceptable to drive a vehicle when they have been drinking alcohol. Our message is that if you have consumed alcohol then you should find another way to get home.”



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Is political book the most influential on Britain?

A UNIVERSITY of Kent professor has been named the author of one of the 20 most influential books in shaping modern Britain – joining a list which includes the likes of Stephen Hawking and Germaine Greer.

Professor of politics at the Canterbury campus, Matthew Goodwin's 2013 book, co-authored with Robert Ford, *Revolt on the Right: Explaining Support for*

the Radical Right in Britain, was selected on a shortlist by leading British academics.

The ultimate winner will be revealed over Academic Book Week at the end of the month.

The list is organised by publishers in conjunction with the British Academy. *Revolt on the Right* won Political Book of the Year in 2015.



KILLER: Kenneth Noye

Noye in High Court bid for open prison

ROAD-rage killer Kenneth Noye has launched a High Court battle to be moved to open prison conditions.

Noye, now 69, was convicted of murder in April 2000 after stabbing electrician Stephen Cameron, 21, to death in a road-rage attack on the M25 at Swanley in 1996, and sentenced to life with a minimum term of 16 years.

In September 2015 the Parole Board declined to order his release, but recommended he be transferred to open conditions. But the board's recommendation was rejected by the then justice secretary Michael Gove. He cited concerns over his "attitude to violence", risk of absconding and "risk of violence linked to the claimant's ego and desire to be in control".

A judge in London is now being asked to rule on whether the rejection decision was "unlawful and irrational".

Edward Fitzgerald QC, for Noye, told Mr Justice Lavender at a hearing on Thursday the killer had made "significant progress in changing his attitudes and tackling his behavioural problems".

Noye's judicial review challenge is contested by current justice secretary Liz Truss, who argues that there was "nothing irrational" in the decision taken. Mr Justice Lavender will give a ruling at a later date.

Super council proposals will not derail local plan, insists Thanet's leader

By Tom Pyman

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PLANS to create an east Kent 'super council' will not threaten the delivery of a local plan for Thanet, the local authority's leader insists.

Proposals were revealed last year to merge the councils of Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet into one authority in a bid to improve the delivery of services to residents as councils continue to struggle with dramatically reduced central government funds.

But as Thanet District Council launched a consultation into amendments to its local plan on Friday, which sets out the future development plans for the district up to 2031, its Ukip leader Chris Wells admitted while there would be benefits to a merged council, its creation would not mean tearing up specific plans for Thanet.

"It's not going to affect this process. At the moment there's an awful lot of conversations going on be-



FUTURE: Broadstairs in Thanet

tween the five councils about what may go where and if that came under a merged council it would, to an extent, simplify the process."

Thanet's plan details how the council needs to find 9,300 more

homes between to meet the government-agreed target total of 17,140 by 2031 – 30 per cent of which will be affordable housing.

While that presents its own challenges, arguably the most controversial aspect will be the council's proposal to turn the former Manston Airport site over to mixed-use development, rather than aviation only. Plans have been submitted to turn it into Stone Hill Park and build 2,500 homes and leisure facilities on the site.

Explains Cllr Wells: "At the moment that evidence for the continuation of Manston as an airport site is not forthcoming, it's not visible, it's not been presented to us and in that context we have to go with the evidence that we do possess.

"People can tell me all they don't like it, but until they produce evidence to the contrary that report is what we have as evidence to send to the inspector."

See www.thanet.gov.uk to take part in the consultation. And turn to page 19 for Chris Wells' response to Ramsgate port suggestions.

Is the NHS transport scheme working?

VIEWS are being sought from patients on the new NHS patient transport service launched last year.

G4S Healthcare Services took over as the provider of non-emergency patient transport in Kent and Medway in July 2016. The service provides free transport for people whose health means they cannot travel to their NHS appointment any other way.

Now Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) – the GP-led organisations that hold the budget for health services locally – want to hear from people that have used the service in the first six months.

Ian Ayres, chief officer for NHS West Kent CCG, who oversaw the procurement of the new service, said: "It's important for us to hear and understand the views of people that have used the service to help ensure our aims are being delivered."

People are asked to complete a short online survey which is available at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/t/PTReview. The survey will close on January 31.

War veterans hunted for 24 special homes

A CHARITY which works to help reintegrate war veterans back into society is on the hunt for people to fill its new specialised apartments.

At its village in Aylesford, Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI) offers homes to vulnerable veterans as well as training and employment opportunities, including the manufacturing of road signs used across the country.

The apartments, due to open in the spring, are situated on Hermitage Lane near Maidstone, just outside the village, and will be individually adapted for ex-service personnel who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or have specific requirements due to health issues.

RBLI's head of estates development, James Mulroy, said of the 24 apartments: "They will be specially adapted for wounded, injured and sick ex-service personnel. Specialist welfare support will also be available along with potential employment opportunities.

"We want to really make a difference to the lives of veterans who are struggling to find a home."

Trump: Our Nigel is a great guy, I like him

DONALD Trump has hailed Nigel Farage a "great guy" during an interview just days before he took over as the 45th president of the United States.

During the interview with Brexit cheerleader and former government minister Michael Gove in *The Times*, Mr Trump mentioned Mr Farage – who he referred to as "our Nigel" – spontaneously after being asked how much he was looking forward to meeting Theresa May.

Mr Farage, who lives in Westerham and is an MEP for the south east, appeared at rallies in support of Mr Trump during the US presidential election campaign and was the first British politician to visit him following his victory.

Mr Trump, whose inauguration took place on Friday in Washington, said: "How is our Nigel doing? I like him, I think he's a great guy, I think he's a very good guy and he was very supportive.

"He'd go around the US – he was saying Trump's gonna win. He was one of the earliest people that said Trump was gonna win. So, he's gotta feel for it."

Violence levels at youth prison still high despite positive view

By Simon Allin

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LEVELS of violence at a prison for young offenders in Rochester remain too high, according to an official report.

There were 127 reports of violent incidents in the six months before inspectors visited HM Young Offenders Institution Cookham Wood in September 2016 – with 33 assaults on young people, 30 assaults on staff and 58 fights.

Assaults on staff were found to have increased by nearly a third since the last inspection and some were very serious.

The inspectors found the facility, which houses boys aged 15 to 18, needs to do more to ensure the safety of inmates.

Overall, however, the report was “very positive” and the prison continued to improve, according to chief inspector of prisons Peter Clarke.

He added: “The prison was led with confidence; the management team seemed cohesive and attentive and an evident strength was the quite impressive culture that was developing amongst the staff as they grew in both experience and confidence.”

But Frances Crook, chief executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, commented: “This is a disappointing report. A child is assaulted every six days in Cookham Wood,



JAIL: Howard League says despite positives it is a “disappointing report”

and it is surprising that a prison can be said to be performing well overall when the level of violence is so high.

“Particularly concerning is the report’s suggestion that a new progression unit was an appropriate response to the main challenges the prison faces in managing behaviour. Children have told us that the very first step in that scheme is at least a week in solitary confinement.

“It is also concerning that inspectors deemed governance of adjudications to be

reasonably good. Research by the Howard League has shown that the number of additional days’ imprisonment imposed on boys in Cookham Wood rose by a staggering 279 per cent in the space of 12 months – from 207 in 2014 to 784 in 2015.

“Prisons, especially those holding children, need to be encouraged to focus on a full and active regime, with suitably qualified staff, rather than managing the inevitable consequences of keeping boys cooped up for hours on end.”

Vandals superglue crown court’s doors

AN investigation is under way after staff at Maidstone Crown Court arrived to work on Tuesday to discover the locks to the building had been superglued shut.

Access was only possible after the locks were drilled out. No cases were delayed.

A spokesperson said: “The locks on three external doors were vandalised. There is an ongoing police investigation.”

Prison after stealing from 101-year-old

A HANDYMAN has been jailed after using his position of trust to steal from elderly neighbours and clients, including a 101-year-old woman.

Michael Ward, 66, of Defiant Close, Chatham, was sentenced after pleading guilty to four counts of theft and one charge of burglary. He was sentenced to 10 months in prison.

School strike averted

POSSIBLE strike action over a pupil assaulting a teacher at a secondary school in Tunbridge Wells has been called off.

Members of the National Union of Teachers threatened to take action following concerns St Gregory’s Catholic School had dealt inappropriately with the incident in December. But talks ended in an agreement being reached.



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Medway bridge forced shut just months after opening

AN £18.9m bridge crossing the River Medway that opened in September has been closed for repairs after just four months.

Peters Bridge spans the stretch near the villages of Wouldham, Burham and Eccles on the river's east bank and Halling to the west to serve a major new housing development on a former quarry site.

Building of the £50m Peters Village started last this year, and is expected to be complete by 2022.

However, bosses have now announced the bridge will be closed all this coming week after incorrect expansion joints were fitted to both ends of the bridge roadway deck and footpaths.

A spokesperson for Trenport, the company which commissioned the bridge, said: "Expansion joints are



designed to allow movement between sections of the bridge, due to traffic weight and temperature variations.

"There is absolutely no danger to the public from having the

incorrect joints in place, but it could affect the long term life of the bridge so, reluctantly, we have to allow [contractor] BAM Nuttall to address the issue as quickly as possible."

Cliftonville is hip-tastic in latest travel site survey

CLIFTONVILLE and Margate's Old Town have been jointly named one of the 'hippest' areas in the UK according to a table compiled by a travel website.

They rank seventh in TravelSupermarket's UK Hip Hang-out Neighbourhood Index which ranks the hippest areas to explore in both the UK and Europe.

Manchester's Ancoats district was number one, with Leith, in Edinburgh, in second place.

Emma Coulthurst from TravelSupermarket says the aim of the index is to inspire city breakers with ideas for new places to discover. She explained: "This will hopefully put Margate even more on the map and encourage new and return visitors to the area."

"We scoured the UK to find the most current, independent-feeling

neighbourhoods. The destinations on the list are exciting areas, unspoiled by commercialism, where locals love to hang out. They offer an eclectic range of food and entertainment.

"We didn't base the ranking on beard-to-face and pints of craft beer ratios - instead, we looked at everything from independent coffee shops and vintage fashion outposts to the local creative culture - the things that set a hip destination apart from the rest of the pack."

"Anywhere with 'peak hipster' status, such as London's Shoreditch, didn't make the cut - places like this are now overrun by chains. Instead, we wanted to find those areas where locals love to hang out due to the area's independent creative spirit."

James gets the boot

STRICTLY Come Dancing star James Jordan was evicted from the Celebrity Big Brother house this week.

Mr Jordan lives in Kings Hill with his wife and fellow dancer, Ola. On departing he told viewers he was "gutted" but pleased to be returning home to his wife.

Churchill funeral auction

A FOLDER containing the ceremonial details and route maps of Sir Winston Churchill's state funeral is to go up for auction in Surrey next month.

The former PM lived at Chartwell in Westerham and died in 1965. The documents are set to sell for £600 at the auction.

Gluten-free consultation

AN online survey into plans by the NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group to stop prescriptions for gluten-free products, for people with coeliac disease concludes next Sunday, in a move which could save £130,000. To take part visit www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WKglutenfree.

China train's Kent route

THE first freight train service from China to the UK passed through Kent just before it arrived in the capital on Wednesday.

Some 34 containers completed the 7,456-mile journey from eastern China to a freight terminal in Barking. It entered the UK via the Channel Tunnel.

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Birth tragedy result of 'failures'

By Dominic Harris

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THE death of a mother just hours after she gave birth to her second son was a result of "failures, inadequate diagnosis and treatment" at the hospital caring for her, a coroner said.

Frances Cappuccini, 30, died at Tunbridge Wells Hospital in Pembury, shortly after giving birth to her son Giacomo in October 2012.

A "bubbly, intelligent, beautiful" school teacher, Mrs Cappuccini suffered heavy bleeding after the Caesarean-section procedure.

She was anaesthetised and operated on but never regained consciousness, dying less than eight hours after her son was born.

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust was condemned over standards after an inquest heard a piece of placenta was mistakenly left inside Mrs Cappuccini's uterus.

Coroner Roger Hatch said the Caesarean-section was not carried out with care and the failure to remove the placenta piece "led directly to the subsequent series of events which tragically ended in the death of Frances".

There were also mistakes in the way she was treated for breathing difficulties and how staff were supervised.

Mrs Cappuccini's husband Tom was in court to hear Mr Hatch deliver

his conclusions at the end of the 10-day inquest.

Her family said that while nothing could "heal the pain" of their loss, after a four-year fight "the truth is acknowledged".

The inquest at Gravesend Old Town Hall heard Mrs Cappuccini had been terrified of having her second child because of difficulties during the birth of her first son.

She had chosen to have an elective Caesarean section birth on October 10 but went into labour two days before and was admitted to the Tunbridge Wells Hospital.

After a 12-hour labour, she finally had the Caesarean procedure, giving birth to Giacomo at 8.28am on October 9.

Suggestions she may have been pressured into having a natural birth were dismissed by the coroner.

After the birth, she began to bleed heavily and was rushed into emergency surgery before eventually going into cardiac arrest and dying at 4.20pm.

Dr Dib Datta, a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist brought in to provide a report on the case, called the overlooking of the placenta a "fundamental failure of care".

Mrs Cappuccini lost 2.3 litres (more than four pints) of blood after the birth but the inquest heard there was no adequate fluid replacement plan in place.

The correct staff were not told of her haemorrhage and note-taking

during her treatment was described as "inadequate".

Doctors also missed symptoms of sepsis and possibly a kidney injury, and the coroner said the premature removal of a breathing tube and a delay in its reinsertion also contributed to the emergency.

Mr Hatch said anaesthetist Dr Na-deem Azeez, who had the main responsibility for Mrs Cappuccini's care, should have been supervised better after being involved in a similar situation before.

The trust and another doctor, Errol Cornish, were accused of manslaughter over Mrs Cappuccini's death last year but the trial against them collapsed when a judge ordered their acquittal.

Prosecutors alleged Dr Azeez had committed a catalogue of "very great failures" which left Mrs Cappuccini unable to breathe properly after surgery and said he too would have faced charges of manslaughter if he had not returned to his native Pakistan.

Speaking on behalf of the family after the inquest, solicitor Kate Rohde said: "Frankie was a wonderful wife, mother, daughter and sister. She was bubbly, intelligent, beautiful, loving and much-loved."

"Failures of Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust and those employed by the trust cost Frankie her life. Nothing can heal that pain."

"At least today, after over four years, the truth is acknowledged."

The trust offered its "deepest sym-



VICTIM: Frances Cappuccini died after giving birth to her son in 2012

pathies" to Mrs Cappuccini's family and said it recognised it had "fallen short" in areas of her care.

As a result of her death, there have been changes to improve patient safe-

ty, it said, and it promised to consider the inquest's evidence to "ensure that any necessary changes which have not already been made are fully addressed."

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Theatre set to drop the curtain on council link

Authority reveals major shake up in its cultural offering, which also includes the closure of its heritage museum

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

CANTERBURY City Council is to relinquish control of the Marlowe Theatre for the first time in its history, as part of radical shake-up of its cultural assets, which will also see its heritage museum close.

The theatre, rebuilt at the cost of £25million just five years ago, will be handed over to a charitable trust with the process expected to take around nine to 12 months to complete.

The proposal, unveiled this week, will go before a council committee on January 25 to give approval for the change.

The popular destination – one of the most popular and successful regional theatres in the country – relied on a £158,757 subsidy from the local authority last year; a figure which has declined year-on-year since topping £700,000 in the mid 1990s.

Such has been its success, its financial planning for next year requests no subsidy from the council at all.

And it is due to its sound footing city chiefs have decided now is the time to cut the apron strings.

Explains Conservative council leader Simon Cook: "The Marlowe is one of the very few municipally run city theatres in the country. Most major city theatres not run by commercial operators are run by a trust, so it's a tried and tested method."

"There are obviously financial benefits to the city council such as the removal of the subsidy, but it allows the theatre to access grants and fund-

ing it cannot currently apply for due to being part of the authority. In addition there are tax benefits such as being able to claim cultural exemption from VAT so it can keep the tax on tickets to plough back into the theatre."

When speaking to KoS last year, Marlowe chiefs admitted there were considerable benefits to a life outside of council control, and they are believed to have embraced the opportunity to plough its own furrow outside the authority.

Cllr Cook adds: "Nearly two million people have been there over last five years and the money the theatre makes is great but pales into insignificance to the wider economic benefit to the city which is estimated to be



CHANGES: Marlowe will be run by a trust while Bagpus, pictured with Peter Firmin, will move to the Beaneys

around £150m over the last five years.

"For a building which cost £25m, we are getting that investment back in spades in terms of wider benefits."

Those benefits are primarily pulling in significant audiences to the 1,200-capacity venue as well as touring production teams – many of whom stay in the city and eat and shop locally.

It is also hoped being free of local authority control will entice more people to donate to bettering the facility.

Explains the council's chief executive Colin Carmichael: "There are lots of people who want to put their own money into the Marlowe but they hold back because they think they are indirectly subsidising the council."

"Under a trust, they'll be prepared to put money into capital and there are plenty of extra bits you can add to on the site."

"I don't think the Marlowe will ever make lots of money – it may occasionally deliver profits of £20-30,000 in some years, but not often. Getting it to the break even point is exactly the point to turn it into a trust so it can progress further from here."

In addition to the council's subsidy, there is an estimated £160-170,000 saving in staff costs should the trust switch be made. The theatre employs around 150-200 people, the majority of which are on casual contracts for front-of-house roles during production runs.

There are no expected redundancies and all staff would transfer to the trust as their employer with contract conditions protected.

The council would still own the building and the land, and charge the trust a 'peppercorn' rent.

The make-up of the charitable trust

East

is yet to be decided but it is hoped a 'big-hitter' will be keen to chair what is proving to be such a success story.

What has not proved such a success in the city, however, is the Canterbury Heritage Museum. City chiefs are proposing it closes and instead becomes the new home of the Marlowe Lab – the theatre's development hub. The new trust would then pay the council a rent likely to be market value – but that is still part of any upcoming negotiations.

The Marlowe Lab's current home – a repurposed house in Pound Lane – would then either be redeveloped by the council or sold.

The heritage museum, in Stour Street, is home to some of the city's crown jewels – including the Canterbury Cross which dates back to 850AD. Discovered in 1867 during excavations in St George's Street in the city, it acquired widespread fame as a symbol of the Church of Christianity throughout the Anglican world.

In addition is the original Bagpus from the hugely popular 1970s TV show, displays devoted to Rupert the Bear, to honour his creator Mary Tourtel who lived in the city, and the Invicta steam engine – designed by Robert Stephenson.

While negotiations will take place for the locomotive, built in 1829, to be displayed in Whitstable, where it served during its time on the rails – the town's museum being one option – the other key collections will instead be relocated to the Beaneys House of Art of Knowledge on Canterbury High Street. A family gallery will be created, but with no entrance fee and some 300,000 annual visitors, it is seen as a more accessible and modern venue to showcase such pieces.

The heritage museum's low visitor numbers have seen the city council have to subsidise each visitor to the tune of £15-16. In total, it costs the authority up to £170,000 a year.

Explains Cllr Cook: "Its location isn't helpful. It's not somewhere you walk past. Heritage is a relatively niche market, and of the 11,000 visitors, only 1,700 were local to the district."

Adds Neil Baker, Conservative councillor and chair of the community committee which will discuss the proposals on Wednesday night: "One of key problems is that there's a cost to use it. The Beaneys on the other hand is free. If you're committing money to the heritage museum you are going to devote time there – the Beaneys you can just pop into and that makes it far more accessible for people."

Peter Firmin, who along with Oliver Postgate, created Bagpus, said he fully supported the move. Mr Firmin lives in Blean, just outside the city.

The Beaneys underwent a £14m three-year refurbishment, opening again in 2012. It already houses the city's main library, a museum and gallery.

All the proposals will go before the council's community committee on Wednesday, January 25.

Councillors will consider the report asking for an in-principle decision to remove the theatre from city council management.

In addition, the report will seek approval to begin a public consultation into the heritage museum closure and the switch of the Marlowe Lab. That consultation, if approved, will run for four weeks throughout February.

The findings of which will then be reported back to the committee later this year.



CLOSING? Heritage museum, bottom, and the Beaneys, above



UNCERTAIN: Donald Trump's inauguration took place on Friday in Washington and ushered into office a man who divides opinion like no other. Picture: PA

President Trump: Will he now make a move to centre ground?

Adele Couchman speaks to a leading Kent academic on what we can expect from the Oval Office

A LEADING academic predicts Donald Trump may "draw back to the centre" as America's controversial figurehead faces the first test of his presidency.

President Trump was sworn in as the 45th president of the United States at the White House on Friday – officially taking office just ten weeks after stunning the world by winning the US election.

Yet his appetite for controversy has not waned or apparently mellowed since his campaign, during which he promised to ban Muslims from entering the US or to build a wall between the US and Mexico.

Arguably, there has never been a more divisive figure in the Oval Office.

But according to Dr George Conyne, a US expert at the school of history at the University of Kent in Canterbury, all of that could be turned round in a bid to hold on to his popularity and appeal to even larger swathes of the American population.

"I predict Trump will draw back to the centre, which I think is a good thing overall," explains Dr Conyne, who grew up in the US before pursuing his career as an academic in Kent.

"Trump's ability as a dealmaker is what will make him popular. He will want to leave a legacy, and for people to look back at his time in office and think 'that wasn't too bad'.

"The superficiality is just something Trump has created to draw attention to himself, which is essential if you're a presidential candidate.

"The spotlight is continually on him – but now he no longer needs that. As we get more and more into his term, the throwaway comments will become less important – instead, the issues will surround his legislation."

With charisma and an ability to resonate with the masses central to his character, Dr Conyne believes Mr Trump will pick and chose popular options from whatever parties across Congress advocate, which in turn he says will create "popular laws and a new belief in government".

He added: "Trump has recently said he doesn't want to take health insurance away from 20 million Americans, taking away Obamacare would be political death and he knows how unpopular that would make him.

"The newspapers would just splash the most blown out of proportion and unrepresentative horror stories across the headlines. His concept will remain similar, but just have a different name."

As a right-wing Republican, scepticism has been raised about Mr Trump repealing the Affordable Care Act – a flagship Obama policy that aims to expand health insurance to some of the poorest segments of the American population. While millions have benefited it has resulted in sharply increased premiums for others.

Despite relentless calls from congressional Republicans to repeal the entire programme, this week Mr Trump tried to assure sceptics that his national healthcare plan would



be "cheaper" than Obamacare – although the details of his version remain unclear.

But as Dr Conyne explains, no matter how appealing these laws may be, getting a bill through the notoriously tricky Congress is another task in itself.

"He's going to look at the most popular things in front of him, like spending a trillion dollars on infrastructure which will upgrade the nation's roads, bridges, tunnels and airports.

"This is immensely popular back home, but Republicans remain opposed to this level of spending – so it

will be interesting to see how things are negotiated.

"The separation of the head of government from the rest of Congress means the law making progress in the US is much more treacherous.

"The system was designed to make things slow so that nobody can push things through that are faddish."

As a Republican who won the White House by railing against the elite and demonising the establishment, for all his contradictions, many working-class voters view Mr Trump as a breath of fresh air.

Yet according to Dr Conyne, a politician who is able to capture the imagination of the disillusioned may not necessarily iron out their problems for them.

He explains: "Hillary Clinton's voters were better educated, so there is a blunt truth in that stupid low-life Trump voters stuff.

"But that argument misses why they were so angry, and why people who aren't particularly well educated voted this way.

"The establishment paid too little attention to blue collar workers like the hamburger flipper and the delivery guy, who has to trek through bad weather to make profits for big companies.

"Those are the kind of people who haven't done well since the economic crash of 2008. They see the computer-tech guys being hired after the economic slowdown, so they see Trump and think he will stir things up a bit.

"But the blue and grey collar work-

ers are the old economy. Those kinds of jobs are disappearing and being replaced by robots and mechanical operations – little by little those jobs are leaving and never coming back.

"This is something those American workers, or more importantly, politicians who want their vote, have never faced."

In contrast to Barack Obama, who said Britain would be at the "back of the queue" when it came to a trade deal with the US, Mr Trump made clear it would be a priority for his administration.

Although prospects of a US-UK trade agreement have been met with delight from the likes of Westerham's former Ukip leader Nigel Farage, who was the first British politician to meet Mr Trump after his election win, Dr Conyne says we shouldn't jump just yet.

"A trade deal is a trade deal. It's a neutral concept. We don't know if it's good or bad until we know what that deal actually is.

"As for his international relations, people are acutely aware of his discomfort towards foreign leaders.

"His idea of standing up to benefit America and bawling at other countries' throats while playing them on the backfoot is something many Americans are perfectly happy with, although I'm not sure if I am."

And most importantly, will Mr Trump deliver on his key promise to make America great again?

On the whole, Dr Conyne thinks so. But as a divisive figure whose outbursts regularly send shockwaves around the world, only time will tell.

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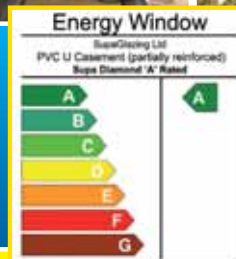
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Do schools tell pupils to quit in order to save league position?

A former head teacher and education consultant says he believes a number of grammar schools are forcing some under-performing students out so as to not drag their results down - claims the schools he mentions have strongly denied

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

GRAMMAR schools across the county may be kicking out under-performing students to improve their league table positions, leaving pupils' "career chances and dreams shattered", an education consultant claims.

Data obtained through the Freedom of Information Act reveals some 22 students left the sixth form of Invicta Grammar School in Maidstone at the end of year 12 in 2015/16.

While there is no suggestion all were pressured to leave, the high levels both there and at other schools in the county, has sparked concerns.

The school claimed the students "did not meet the entry requirements to continue into year 13 in line with the school's admission policy" and recommended they "consider a change of pathway and/or apply to alternative schools or colleges".

Teenagers cannot not be dropped midway through courses simply for poor results unless agreed with the student.

However, in making the allegations on his consultancy website, KentAdvice.co.uk, former Gravesend head Peter Read says the school adopted "unlawful tactics to secure top A Level grade performance". A claim the school vehemently denies.

He says his claims have been supported by more than a dozen pupils and parents who have come forward to him and said they were kicked out of Invicta for not achieving what

the school deemed acceptable grades.

Yet Mr Read fears the problem is not limited to Invicta and may be a system being employed across Kent and Medway in a bid to boost league table positions for performance.

"This is a county-wide issue," he told KoS this week, "but Invicta seems to be the worst offender. Each year, I am contacted by a number of young people, mainly but not exclusively in grammar schools, who are not admitted to sixth forms although fully qualified according to the school admission criteria, or who are forced out at the end of year 12 because the school only wants the highest performing students for the sake of their league table position."

"In each case some students may genuinely have found the course too difficult, others found schools with unrealistically high academic expectations, come to their own conclusion after AS Level results are published that it is not worth continuing, or simply found an other career path that looks more attractive."

"But the figures are far too high at some schools for this to be the only reason."

"It leaves students feeling like absolute failures; they see their career chances and dreams shattered and in some cases it has been totally unexpected."

Julie Derrick, headteacher of Invicta Grammar School, said: "This is an 'interpretation' by a couple of students - it is not accurate."

"All our students are supported to follow the correct academic path to enable their own personal success. We advise students for what is best for them."

Responding to the FOI request made by Peter Read, a spokesperson for Invicta added: "The school provides ongoing support and guidance in relation to securing places at alternative schools and colleges."

"The circumstances were discussed with both the parents and the students and it was mutually agreed that the students would not continue into year 13 at the school."

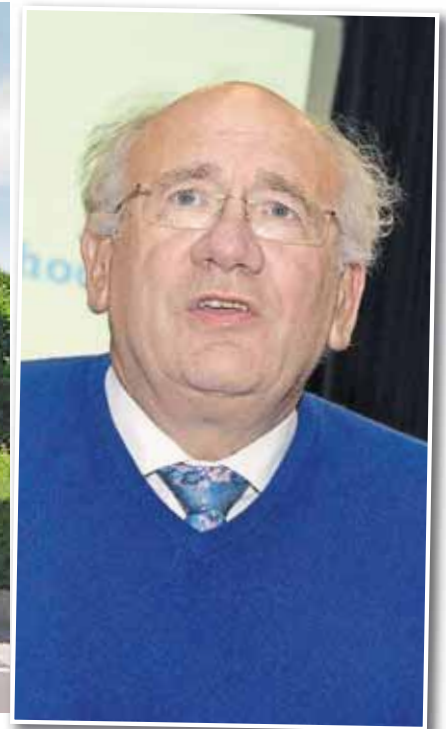
"If any of these students had wished to remain at the school for year 13, this would have been considered further with the parents and students until a resolution was agreed."

"The school does not stipulate to students that they are 'not allowed' to remain in the school for year 13, however the school encourages the students and parents to understand that it may be in the best interests of the students if they proceed with a different pathway or move to an alternative school or college."



East

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CRITICISED: Invicta Grammar School in Maidstone (above) has come under fire this week as allegations its sixth form kicks out those students it deems underperforming at the end of year 12 have come to light. Education consultant Peter Read (inset) fears the issue is seen across Kent.

Mr Read highlights a number of grammar sixth forms across the county with a high number of 'drop outs' at the end of year 12, including Wilmington Grammar School for Girls, in Dartford, which had the highest number in 2015, with some 34 girls not following their studies through to year 13.

However, executive head, Donna Lodge, has hit back and rubbished suggestions of wide-

spread wrongdoing.

"A pathways approach was adopted with students able to opt to study for A Levels over two years or opt for a one year pathway which incorporated focused work experience and study for AS Levels," she said.

"Many of the students leaving are not considered as failures in any respect and indeed several were offered apprenticeship opportunities

as a result of extremely successful work experience placements.

"In 2014 the sixth form accepted a large number of late applicants who had either been declined admission in their existing schools or who had belatedly made the decision to attempt A Level courses.

"Although some of these students departed at the end of year 12, this was not necessarily for

negative reasons and this coincided with the arrival of a newly appointed careers and employment advisor, who was able to counsel students throughout the year, regarding the many options available to them.

"To suggest the students are all 'booted out' is completely wrong."

Despite Invicta bosses' protestations, one parent, said her daughter was asked to leave at the

Continued on page 16

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Continued from page 15

end of year 12 in 2014, having achieved C grades in psychology and business studies, a D in German, an E in general studies and a U in biology.

"My daughter went to Invicta between year 7 and 11 and it was absolutely fine, there were no problems," the mother told KoS.

"She was an active student in academic and school life, she took part in charity events and would give up a lot of her own time.

"But going into the sixth form, she said at the time 'people don't say nice things about it, can I leave?'. As a teacher myself I thought 'better the devil you know' and told her to stay where she was."

But her first year proved a struggle as she attempted to cope with the five A Levels the school expected their students to study for and, says her mother, "on results day she was pulled to one side and told to go, and being under so much stress she agreed".

The parent added: "They said my daughter was quite happy to leave of her own accord and that they would have offered an opportunity to retake year 12 but we received no such offer.

"There was no support for her to find somewhere else, no recommendations," she said.

"I just feel very, very let-down because they are clearly all about results."

The concern is that this is far from confined to just grammar schools who guard their performance in league tables so fiercely.

With teenagers now having to ensure they remain in full-time education, training or on an apprenticeship until they are 18, the race to score highly in the all important league tables for performance are never higher.

And, traditionally, grammars have proved adept at luring the largest number of students to their sixth forms. Although no entrance exam is needed, as with the Kent Test at 11, to gain entry to the sixth form, grammars are still perceived as learning hotbeds and therefore are always in high demand.

Phil Karnavas, executive principal of the Canterbury Academy is no fan of the selective

NON-SELECTIVE PRINCIPAL ADMITS FEARS OF A COUNTY-WIDE SCANDAL

Phil Karnavas, executive principal of The Canterbury Academy, was one of dozens of non-selective heads who joined forces last year to send a letter to the prime minister, outlining objections to the government's planned expansions of grammars.

He told KoS this week: "Clearly, I cannot comment about any specific school but I do believe it is happening with increasing frequency across schools in Kent. The only surprising this is that anyone is surprised.

"The Kent selective system, within a dangerous and damagingly flawed national accountability framework, suffers many abuses.

"Some Kent grammar schools take significant numbers of children who have neither passed the Kent Test, nor were recommended by the headteacher appeals process, into Year 7.

"This is generally for financial reasons but will be disingenuously presented as

enhancing social mobility – one of the oldest of educational red herrings.

"Some other grammar schools, desperate to maintain their assumed elite status, may discourage students from staying into the sixth form, or from completing A Level, if their expected results threaten to tarnish that school's shining reputation for academic excellence.

"To be fair, it is not just some grammar schools that are 'gaming the system'.

"There is compelling evidence that some non-selectives, especially in academy chains, are also engaged in a process of 'academic cleansing' and removing students in Year 11 to fiddle their figures.

"In any target driven system, the drive will be to meet targets.

"In some schools, desperate to maintain their presumed prestige, a number of students will quietly disappear.

"In some schools, desperate for their survival, others and generally the most

vulnerable students will be ruthlessly removed.

"There are a variety of ways headteachers can manipulate their figures and there are a variety of reasons to do it.

"The most obvious being to improve results, to climb the league tables, to achieve or preserve Ofsted outstanding status, to cling on to a National Leader of Education role and, of course, to bank a performance related pay rise.

"When education degenerates into an exercise in statistical manipulation, when some students are seen as acceptable collateral damage in pursuit of better results, when those in power look the other way and when gaming the system becomes more important than the system supporting the children it is supposed to serve, then we should be brave enough to individually and collectively scream 'enough is enough'.

"Either education has a moral purpose for all, or it has no moral purpose at all."

system, and says he has long heard claims to match Peter Read's claims.

He told KoS (the full transcript of which can be seen in the box above): "Clearly, I cannot comment about any specific school but I do believe it is happening with increasing frequency across schools in Kent. The only surprising this is that anyone is surprised.

"The Kent selective system, within a dangerous and damagingly flawed national accountability framework, suffers many abuses."

Kent County Council has a responsibility to track all students between 16 and 18 under legislation that came in two years ago, but is understood to be powerless in this instance.

The council's education chief Roger Gough was unavailable for comment when contacted repeatedly by KoS this week.

Joanne Bartley of the Kent Education Network campaign group, which promotes non-selective education, said: "This is really quite shocking.

"Grammar schools are very proud of their A Level results and it's completely unfair for pupils to be told halfway through that they need to find another place elsewhere.

"It's a particular problem because high schools don't offer a huge range of A Level courses so they find it difficult to continue at another school. They are putting results above people's best interests.

"Pupils feel they are being put under an awful lot of pressure and academic results are not everything – if a student doesn't go to university, that's fine.

"Grammars focus so much on top universi-

ties, but life is about more than getting into Oxford.

"However, I don't think it will affect numbers applying because there's a lot of prestige in going to a grammar school."

Mr Read disagreed: "I think this will certainly affect the number wanting to go to Invicta – I know of two families planning to apply externally who have changed their minds.

"This is damaging, it's saying 'we only want the very best A Levels in the county'.

"They have historically been one of the highest performing in the county and now we know why."

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Wells hits back at MP call for port to be sunk

In an article written *exclusively* for KoS, Chris Wells, Ukip leader of Thanet District Council, responds to South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay's call in last week's paper for talks to take place over the closure of the Port of Ramsgate and, instead, for leisure facilities to be built there...

By Chris Wells

Leader, Thanet District Council

THE Port of Ramsgate was built to meet demand for 'roll-on roll-off' (Ro-Ro) services between the UK and the continent.

For over 30 years the service operated successfully between the port to both Dunkirk in France and Ostend in Belgium – at its peak handling two million passengers and 500,000 lorries and cars through more than 3,500 sailings.

Like all the Channel ports, Ramsgate was severely affected by the removal of duty free status in 1999. In spite of which, services continued until TransEuropa went under in 2013. Yet the market for a Ramsgate to Ostend route, in particular, still exists. Previous customers indicate they can still provide up to 100,000 vehicle movements a year through the port if the facility returns to full use.

In April 2015 we were approached as a possible solution to the potential for significant industrial action at French ports, but were simply not in a position to accept any ferries, due to both the lack of dredging and the condition of the berths.

It was this background of short term cost reductions and missed opportunity which greeted me as incoming leader in May 2015.

This explains very simply why, over the last 18 months, we have embarked upon a significant improvement programme, with an investment value of more than £2m. This programme has included dredging the harbour basin so we can accept vessels without tidal restriction and extensive refurbishment of both ferry berths, which will now be potentially operational for the next 20 years.

For the first time in four years, the Port of Ramsgate is ready to commence a new cross Channel service at a time when the demand for Ro-Ro port facilities in the south east is forecast to increase from 50.8 million tonnes in 2015 to 73.6 million tonnes in 2035.

The port is the second closest port to continental Europe, which means the number of sea miles travelled and the journey times are relatively short, reducing the amount of expensive fuel used on longer routes. The amount of fuel used by the huge engines in cross Channel ferries is a major factor in the cost of running a regular ferry service.

The port has excellent and improved connectivity with the UK road network, thanks to the completion of the A299 carriageway duelling in 2013, and the £30m port access tunnel in 1999. The dedicated road tunnel which completely bypasses the town of Ramsgate is a strong selling point for the port along with the nearby dual carriageway link to the motorway network. Ramsgate is 58 miles from the M25 via road; the same distance as the Port of Dover.

The location of the port clearly has a strategic advantage for hauliers and can make a significant contribution in terms of reducing overnight parking in Kent, providing an alternative to Dover, reducing the financial impact to hauliers of the Dover TAP and Operation Stack, and can also ensure that HGVs remain on the strategic road network, rather than using smaller B roads to avoid issues which impact on local communities.

We recognise the strategic importance of the port in addressing future demand for a cross Channel Ro-Ro freight service. Hauliers require a modern, efficient and reliable service to maintain an edge in a very competitive market. The port can offer this level of quality through a pre-booked service that is not affected by seasonal traffic, and means HGVs can actually get here on time providing confidence that they can meet their customer's expectations. The temporary arrangement with Gefco's car import business has ably demonstrated the ability of Ramsgate to service customer business requirements, and has been a working advertisement for our services.

With the announcement the UK will probably be leaving the single market and more restrictive customs control is likely to be introduced, this will impact traffic flows in what is already an over stretched road network around Dover. Indeed, throughout my time as leader, I have lost no opportunity to express the view of the strategic stupidity of maintaining a position where all of our main continental business runs down a single road to a single point of contact at Dover and Folkestone, to a single point of contact in France. The penalties of monopoly position were made very clear by the impacts of industrial action last year.

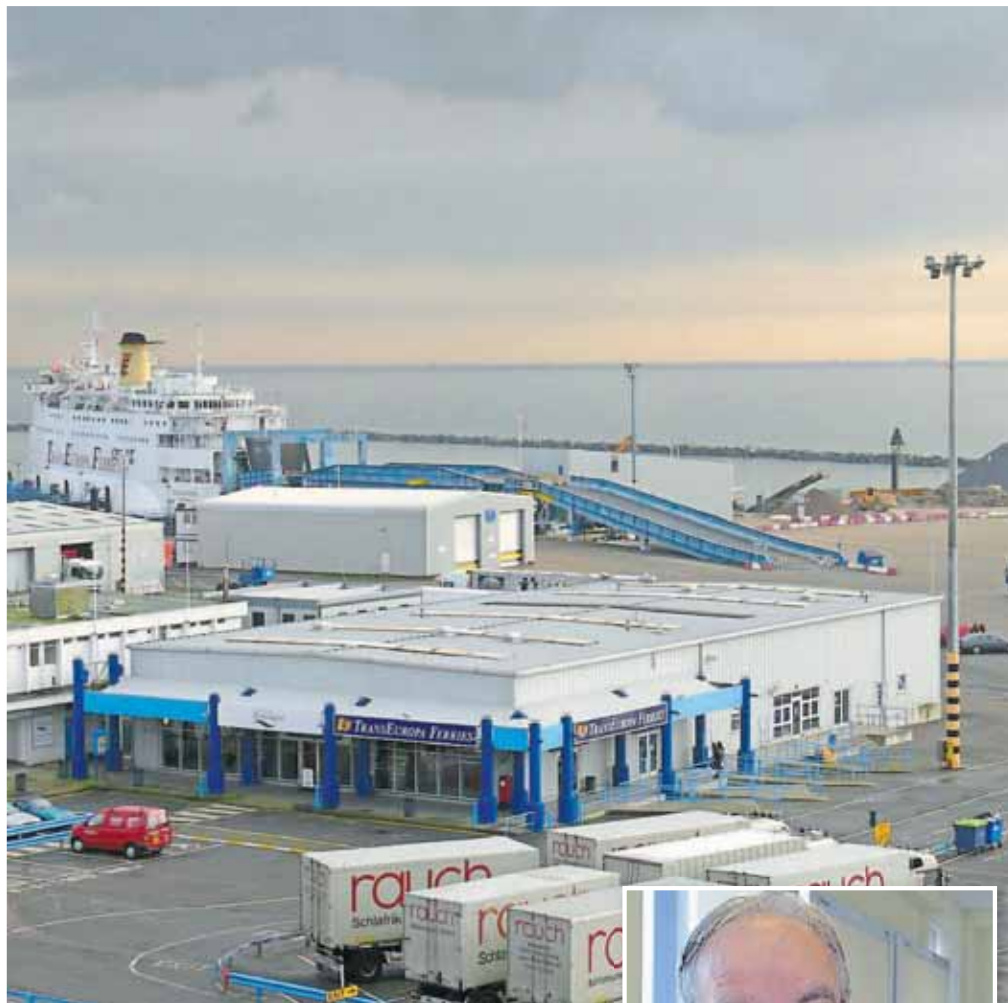
The potential for the reintroduction of duty free could also have a massive impact, perhaps breathing new life to more than one port along the Channel coast.

There is also the proposed third Thames crossing, plus the work of the Thames Estuary Commission, all pointing towards a boom in investment, growth and opportunities along the southern Thames Estuary corridor, and Ramsgate is ideally positioned to support this coming opportunity.

We have worked, as an administration, swiftly and purposefully, to position the Port of Ramsgate to take best advantage from the changing conditions of the transport market place, and earn the residents of Thanet both income and jobs from what may follow. We are working closely with partners to deliver new and sustainable ferry operations, that will not only benefit the district but also the whole logistics infrastructure across east Kent and the wider south east.

Some tell me it's time to concrete over the port, and build houses there instead. Whilst I recognise that represents this government's view of economic progress, I prefer to seek jobs from the assets we have available to generate them before adding to government imposed housing totals. It's called sustainability in planning jargon. For most of us with local knowledge, it's plain common sense.

■ **What do you think? Share your views and join the debate by writing to: The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford, TN23 1PP or email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk. We'll print some of the best on our letters' page.**



READY: The Port of Ramsgate, owned by Thanet council, recently saw multi-million pound losses, but Chris Wells, right, says it's now fighting fit



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Branches of killer ash disease spread wider

And the cost of tackling a problem, which is sweeping our forests from the east to the west, is beginning to add up...

By Adele Couchman
adele.couchman@archant.co.uk

The scale of a deadly disease that could dramatically alter the face of Kent's forests has been put under the spotlight this month as council chiefs say the "huge costs" are just beginning to be revealed.

Ash dieback is a deadly fungal disease that kills ash trees – one of the most abundant tree species in the UK and the most common in Kent. The disease causes leaf loss and ultimately the dieback of the crown of the tree, and often leads to tree death.

It was first discovered in this country in 2012 after being blown over the English Channel, or imported via tree nurseries from Europe, with Kent being one of the first authorities to be affected by the disease.

Although woodland managers first discovered the problem in the east of the county, the Forestry Commission says the fungal disease has now been found in almost every part of Kent – with conservationist chiefs fearing more than 75 per cent of ash trees in

the county will be affected by 2018. And that has made local politicians seek a national discussion about just how to tackle it.

With the outbreak already devastating ash woodlands in other parts of northern Europe, the issue was raised by the environment and transport committee at a Kent County Council this month, with councillors expressing concerns the county is only now on the cusp of the outbreak.

"The huge costs are just beginning to be realised," explains deputy cabinet member for the environment and transport committee Clive Pearman.

"When we lose ash trees there is a huge cost of removing them. Kent County Council is responsible for over 5,000 miles of highways – and a number of trees could fall on those roads.

"As well as removing and disposing of the dead wood, there's also the manpower costs – we have to employ contractors that are much more expensive, as we can't just have council officers due to the scale of the problem.

"Contractors have to work with

thoroughly cleansed equipment, and lots of qualities and standards to be met otherwise the disease just spreads around.

"So now, what we're trying to do is look at the issue more urgently by getting a national meeting together to try and work out whether there is a better solution for dealing with this disease."

KCC says it will be keeping a close eye on its costs to try and seek funding from the government's Bellwin Scheme – a system that supports local authorities in the event of disasters and emergencies.

The grant is normally payable to authorities at 85 per cent of eligible costs incurred above a threshold set for each authority. For Kent County Council, this threshold is £1,829,114.

Although an exact figure on just how much the authority has spent on the outbreak is unclear – the council says it is somewhere below the near £2 million threshold – ash dieback related highway safety costs trebled last year, according to Cllr Pearman.

And he fears if the disease is to become even more widely established,



the impact could be as serious as the 1970s outbreak of Dutch elm disease, which saw millions of trees destroyed.

He added: "Ash dieback is a great concern not just about the trees, but the environment, our wildlife, tourism, and also the economy.

"Once you lose the tree, it can take another 30 years for that to grow in its place. If this disease sweeps, you can only imagine the repercussions it would have on our landscape."

With ash making up around a fifth of the county's trees, the effects of the disease could be devastating.

But Woodland Trust site manager for the south east, Clive Steward, says nothing can be done to stop the outbreak, with the only solution lying in regenerating our countryside.

"You can't get rid of it," he told KoS, "the disease is well established in the eastern side of the county, particularly on the eastern side of Ashford. But increasingly it is making its way westward.

"Young trees are more susceptible to the disease, and older trees don't show the effects so soon where it can take up to five to six years to really see

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signs of the disease.

"Only five per cent of affected trees have survived in Europe, so we are hoping there could be a genetic difference – although that might be clutching at straws.

"It's a real worry, as ash trees are a predominantly dominant tree species throughout England seeing as man used ash for timber and firewood to survive in the past.

"Now what we desperately need is to restructure our woodland so it's more resilient and we are less dependant on one species."



SIGNS: The mighty ash tree, left, is the single biggest variety of tree in the county, but they are being blighted by ash dieback, a condition which more often than not kills the tree and can easily be spread, sweeping from the east of the county to the west in recent years.

Although no concrete details are yet to emerge, the environment and transport committee have identified a need to co-ordinate activity and

learning on ash dieback at a national level, and are in the early stages of establishing a national ash conference in partnership with the Wood-

WHAT IS ASH DIEBACK?

Also known as Chalara, ash dieback is a disease of ash trees caused by a fungus called *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (the fungus was previously called *Chalara fraxinea*, hence the name of the disease).

Chalara causes leaf loss, crown dieback and bark lesions in affected trees. Once a tree is infected the disease is usually fatal, either directly, or indirectly by weakening the tree to the point where it succumbs more readily to attacks by other pests or pathogens, especially *Armillaria* fungi, or honey fungus.

The first signs of Chalara in Britain were found in a nursery in Buckinghamshire in February 2012. Improved monitoring techniques continue to uncover new finds.

The fungus is believed to have entered Britain on plants imported from nurseries in continental

Europe. However, now it has been found in older trees in East Anglia, Kent and Essex with no apparent connection with plants supplied by nurseries. Which has led to investigations to see if it might have entered by natural means.

These include being carried on the wind or on birds coming across the North Sea and English Channel, or on items such as footwear, clothing or vehicles of people who had been in infected sites in continental Europe.

According to the European Plant Protection Organization (EPPO), Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden have confirmed its presence. On the basis of symptoms, the disease has also been observed in Denmark, Estonia, Latvia and Switzerland.

Source: Forestry Commission

land Trust and other key stakeholders.

Additionally, a 'Kent tree strategy' is to be produced to develop a policy framework for a sustainable future for the county's trees and woodland.

To combat the problem, the Woodland Trust have also created a targeting tree disease pack which contain species for woodland owners to plant to replace trees that have been lost to disease.

They are available to buy from the Woodland Trust's website and cost

£60 per pack.

A Forestry Commission spokesperson said: "We want to ensure that the graceful ash tree continues to have a place in our landscape.

"Natural tolerance to the disease does exist, and the UK is taking a leading role in the work to identify chalara-tolerant trees and understand the genetic factors which make them tolerant.

"This government-funded research is producing positive results, and will enable tolerant trees to be bred for the future."

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400 years on, the inspiring legacy of Pocahontas lives on

At the final resting place of the pioneering real-life Native American, a series of special events is taking place. We speak to a descendant and experts about her life

By Emily King

emily.king@archant.co.uk

WHEN movie studio Disney released the animated classic Pocahontas in 1995, it drew attention to the life of a quite remarkable woman who lived and died in the collision of two very different worlds.

And while the fictional account was based only loosely on the reality of her extraordinary life, it brought the Native American to a global audience with an interest which continues to this day.

This year marks the 400th anniversary of her death – a life journey which ended in dramatic circumstances at Gravesend – a town which has long marked its association with her.

And now Gravesham Borough Council is marking the date with a year-long series of events bringing her story to life once more in the 21st century, through talks and exhibitions, art and song.

Certainly her life was remarkable – daughter of a tribal chief in what is now Virginia, she was confronted by settlers in the 17th century and, legend has it, saved the life of one Englishman facing execution.

Then kidnapped by the settlers and held for ransom, she converted to Christianity, fell in love with an English tobacco planter and became a society celebrity, known as the 'civilised savage'.

Celebrations of her life, dubbed Pocahontas 400, began with a ceremony last week at St George's Church in Gravesend – the burial place of a woman whose historical impact was significant despite only living until she was just 21.

Direct descendant John Rolfe, mayor of Gravesham Greta Goatley, US ambassador Matthew Barzun, Crow Creek cultural ambassador to the UK Stephanie Pratt, Thamesview School pupils, and Jordan Meade, Gravesham cabinet member for tourism, heritage and youth, assembled to lay 21 roses by a statue of Pocahontas at the site of the church.



Cllr Meade said: "Pocahontas 400 is a unique opportunity for Gravesham to promote our rich riverside heritage.

"The borough is extremely proud to be part of such an important story. Pocahontas was a remarkable young woman, who set out, on a small craft, across storm-tossed seas to promote how despite differences, we can live,

function and adapt for that cause of peace through unity.

"Today the legacy of Pocahontas lives on in the youth of our borough and I encourage everyone to participate.

"I am very pleased to see the borough is coming together to mark this important milestone."

Reverend Canon Chris Stone, of St George's Church, says the true story remains inspiring to this day.

He told KoS: "She really stood for two things; peace and reconciliation. She's a constant reminder that people of different backgrounds can come together peacefully."

Mr Rolfe, a direct descendant of Pocahontas who lives in Yorkshire, added: "She was incredibly powerful, and is still iconic. She sends a message to all young people today that you can achieve so much in such a short period of your life. Personally, I'm incredibly proud to descend from someone so courageous."

Pocahontas grew up as part of a tribe, and as the youngest daughter of



ANNIVERSARY: Dignitaries, including the US ambassador and a relative of Pocahontas, join school children to kick-start Pocahontas 400, a series of special events to remember her life and times

Powhatan, the great chief of the Tsenacommacah area – today known as Jamestown in Virginia.

It was in 1607, at the age of 13 or 14 that she first came into contact with the English. They were men who came to America as part of The Virginia Company, a company set up by King James I with the purpose of establishing colonial settlements in America.

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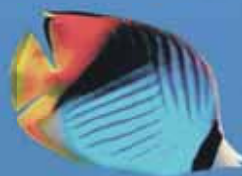


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"Other attempts had been made by the English to settle in America before 1607 but they were unsuccessful," explained Rev Stone.

"Her first interaction with the English is the story which inspired the Disney movie.

"Captain John Smith was taken prisoner, and she saved him. He used to tell people the story himself which is why there is scepticism about it. In his account she put herself between him and her father who was about to put John Smith to death. She said 'Father if you're going to kill him, you'll have to kill me first'".

After John Smith was released, the settlers kidnapped Pocahontas and held her ransom in a desperate plea

for food. An act which initiated her journey to England.

"Food was in short supply, so they took her and asked for food for her return, but this incident changed her," Rev Stone says. "While hostage, Pocahontas was educated by Alexander Whittaker and became the first Native American to be baptised as a Christian."

Adds John Rolfe: "Not only was she baptised but she took on a completely different culture at such a young age. She even changed her name to Rebecca. It wasn't just a case of accepting the English settlers, essentially she started to become English. She was promoting the coming together of both cultures, and showing the

people that they could work together as a collective. This is what she's remembered for today, as these are her actions which are seen as most significant.

"It's amazing that she had so much influence on people at such a young age, and that she was so willing to show everyone that peace was possible."

Her baptism is depicted on a stained glass window at St George's Church, as it marks an important milestone in the history of Christianity. Pocahontas is also an iconic figure for interracial marriage, as it's believed she was the first Native American woman to marry an English man.

Rev Stone continued: "Once baptised, she decided to stay with the English settlers. She then fell in love and married tobacco planter John Rolfe in 1614 – John Smith had left America by this point. They, along with their son Thomas, decided to go back to England, bringing members of her tribe with them.

"When she arrived in London she was received as royalty, and it became her job to encourage people to go to America to settle and invest in the Virginia Company who were short of funds.

"While there she met the King and Queen, the Bishop of London, and she actually met John Smith again. She was a kind of celebrity there because people were fascinated by her. You have to remember that Native Americans were viewed as savages at this point. They saw her as a 'civilised savage'."

Having finished what she went to London to do, it was time to go back to America, and it was then that she made her way to Gravesend – setting

sale from London, down the Thames.

"I think she was homesick, and that's why they really decided to leave. You have to remember, Pocahontas was only 21 when she died, it's completely normal for a 21-year-old to want to be with their family," says Mr Rolfe.

Mr Stone explains why they stopped in Gravesend: "It was always the last mainland stop before crossing the Atlantic to America, but we're not actually sure how Pocahontas got to the town. She could either have travelled on land or by ship, but either way it was on her way there that she became ill.

"When she arrived her illness got worse, and so it's in Gravesend that she died. We're not sure what killed her, but it's thought she may have had dysentery, a kind of infection in the intestines."

Nowadays, it's unclear where on the ground of St George's Church Pocahontas is actually buried.

The Rev Stone elaborated: "The church that was there at the time, is not the same church that stands there today because a fire burned the original down in 1727 and it was rebuilt in 1732. As a result of this, we don't know where her grave is, all we know is that the burial records show her

name, and that it's thought she might lie underneath the altar."

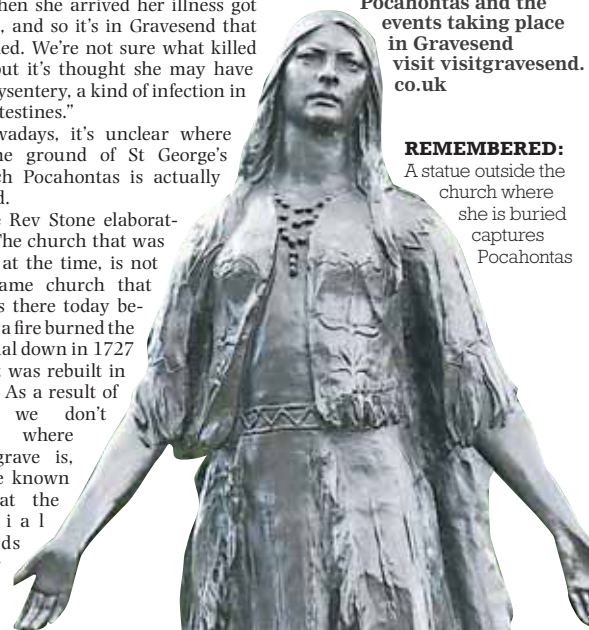
Mr Rolfe claims that the tribe his ancestor descends from are supportive of her body remaining in Gravesend. He said: "They have said they do not wish for her to be moved and think it's very important that she remains where she is because there is a great deal of respect for her legacy in Gravesend."

Pocahontas' death will be honoured in a commemorative parade from St George's Church and through Gravesend on its anniversary of March 21.

■ For more information about Pocahontas and the events taking place in Gravesend visit visitgravesend.co.uk

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A statue outside the church where she is buried captures Pocahontas



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A warm WELCOME awaits you at Chaucer House

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Manager: Anelli Chatfield

Can you tell us a little more about your role at Chaucer House and why it is so important to you to ensure the well being of the residents and the team around you?

"I am the Registered Manager of Chaucer House and I am proud to say I have had this role since the Home opened in 2015. I am responsible for the overall day to day running of the Home and support my team to be the best they can be. As a person centred practitioner it is essential to me to promote the well being of the people we support and as well as my colleagues. I strive to ensure that Chaucer House is a great place for people to live and work, a place where they feel valued, respected and empowered. I enjoy nurturing people and helping them to reach their full potential. I love Chaucer House and feel privileged to lead such an amazing team."

Deputy Manager: Nick Chatfield

There must be lots of challenges in managing a whole host of health complications- can you tell us more about the care offered at Chaucer House?

"At Chaucer House we are able to provide the highest standard of Nursing care for a wide range of illnesses and conditions. I am supported by our

excellent clinical team of Nurses and Care staff who, between them, have many years of experience and a vast pooled knowledge base. This enables us to confidently provide care for the most complex of needs. Fundamentally, we care for people and I believe that the giving and receiving of care should be an enjoyable experience for everyone involved. I love that at Chaucer House we provide truly person centred care and one of my favourite aspects of my job, is the therapeutic relationships I form with the people we care for and their families."



Nurse:

Can you tell us a bit about your Nursing Background and what is important to you?

"Before coming to Chaucer House I worked for three years in the community as a District Nurse, visiting people in their own homes. Putting the individual at the centre of everything we do has always been important to me and I am passionate about palliative care and feel honoured to support people who are at the end of their lives."

Administrator: Jackie Morrisson

What does your role entail and what do you enjoy about your work?

"What I enjoy most about Chaucer House is working in such a relaxed atmosphere. Everyone is



friendly and genuinely happy from the people that work here, the people that live here, their families and friends. I go home feeling happy and as long as the people we support are happy and content in their new home, I am too. I have a very supportive Manager who leads the home efficiently and effectively. We all work as a team which is great because it makes it a fantastic place to work."

Head Chef: Robin Walker

There must be lots of different tastes and requirements amongst residents-how do you approach creating the menu?



OUR journey through life into old age can sometimes leave people a little disorientated.

After all, after a life time of activity and companionship, so many of us find ourselves entering our older years facing up to a rather different reality.

From aches and pains making even simple movements problematic, to retirement and a lack of a daily routine, or the devastation of the loss of a husband and wife or friends, it can turn lives upside down and leave once happy, content and active people becoming both insular and socially withdrawn.

And make no mistake, loneliness can be as damaging to health as a host of other conditions.

According to Age UK, more than two million people in England, over the age of 75, live alone. More than a million say they go for over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member.

It is that social isolation which can be so damaging; potentially leading to depression and physical illness.

So how do you go about easing the issues?

Key areas, according to the NHS, are simple ones. And that tends to centre around being proactive.

And that primarily focuses around initiating conversation and engaging with those around you. Whether it is in shops, GP waiting rooms or the local tearooms. Getting back into the habit of speaking to people can be daunting at first, but

will quickly become second nature.

Likewise, don't always wait to be asked to visit people – why not invite them round to your house for tea or a meal? Chances are they'll appreciate seeing you and relish the opportunity for a chat.

If a lack of friends is the stumbling block, there are plenty of organisations designed to keep people in touch with others in a similar position. Ask at your local GP surgery and they're likely to be able to point you in the right direction.

The internet has revolutionised the way in which people communicate and it is never too late to embrace some of its key benefits.

Always remember that computers, tablets and smartphones have become so popular through their ease of use and intuitive natures. After all, if a five-year-old can get their head around it, there's no reason someone full of the experiences and knowledge of a lifetime will struggle.

Friends and family will often be only too happy to assist – or visit your local library to get to grips with the machines they have accessible there.

Applications like Skype allow video calls – allowing those involved to see one another as they speak. And, if connected via a home broadband connection, are often free too.

Meanwhile email is a free way of keeping in regular contact with people.

And while there's plenty on the internet you'll never need to know, being able simply to find local groups and organisations to interact with –



TECHNOLOGY: Embrace the digital age and you'll be surprised how easy it is to keep in touch

Keep engaged in life to reap the full benefits

perhaps specialising in interests you've had or want to have – can be made so much easier.

Even highly publicised social media platforms such as Facebook can allow you to connect to family and friends – and reconnect with those you have lost touch with over the years.

And while once upon a time a decent computer would set you back £1,000 today you can be online for less than £100 with a tablet computer you can operate while sat in your armchair at home.

Remember too, that if you want to get out and about, then pensioners can often get great discounts. From free bus travel to cheaper train and coach travel. There's plenty of opportunities to get out and about – even if it's just into your nearest town for a spot of shopping.

The exercise and fresh air will do you the world of good too.

But perhaps most importantly, is to not feel worthless. You are blessed with great experience and knowledge and there's no reason you should not

keep looking to pass that on.

There are plenty of volunteering opportunities which will not only allow you to keep occupied, but deliver a genuine worthwhile contribution to your local society. Plus you'll meet lots of new people.

Getting into old age can certainly be daunting for many, but if you embrace the opportunities, rather than run from them, you can enjoy a lease of life you never thought possible.

So be brave, be confident and make the most of your life.



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K. Park

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Within these settings, specialist elderly care is provided for people with mental health needs, predominantly dementia. Care is also offered to those with an early onset diagnosis of dementia, this may be in form of our Day Care Services, Respite Services, Home Care Services or short term emergency care. There is a registered mental nurse and dementia clinic available through our Day Services to

offer clinical support and supervision for staff, service users and families across all of our sites.

We believe that each individual is a unique social being who has dignity and worth, although requiring acts of assistance due to their frailty, or ill health, this should only be done in a climate which enables them to retain their self-respect and independence. Carers will provide holistic caring relationships, which will assist residents to maintain optimum mental, physical, social and spiritual well being. With over 20 years experience, Belmont Sandbanks has a history of delivering on their vision of care: your loved ones are in safe hands.

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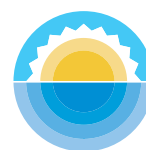
Our objectives are:

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- To develop our carers and the systems of caring
- To maintain a safe and secure environment
- To provide a homely environment
- To encourage involvement from and provide support for relatives
- To be innovators in care

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Because Memories Matter...



CHANGES: While changes came into force in 2015, it remains unclear, as yet, whether further proposed changes for 2020 will actually come into force

Be smart over your rights to care

Changes in legislation recently have highlighted a number of issues you will need to be aware of...

AMID increasing concerns about caring for the elderly and the costs involved, the government implemented fresh legislation in 2015, the impacts of which will continue to be felt for years to come.

Designed to ensure care and support is more consistent across the country, the Care Act is designed to put the user in more control of the assistance they receive.

It came amid mounting concerns that care costs were spiralling and forcing more and more people to sell their homes in order to pay for it.

It outlines the way in which local authorities should carry out carer's assessments and needs assessments; how local authorities should determine who is eligible for support; how local authorities should charge for both residential care and community care; and places new obligations on local authorities.

A key thrust is to ensure the 'well-being' of the individual requiring care is always a key concern.

So why should you be alert to the changes? Well, it will have an impact on the manner in which care provision is both provided and financed and how you go about finding out if you – or a loved one – is eligible for support.

And remember, this does not simply mean the costs of residential care

– such as moving into a care home – but services provided at-home too.

Some aspects of the act came into force in April 2015 but further aspects, due to come into play last year, were delayed until April 2020.

According to Age UK, the country's largest charity dedicated to everyone making the most of later life, the key changes already introduced were:

- Right to a free needs assessment from your local council – even if it thinks your finances are too high or your needs too low to qualify for help.

- All councils will use a new national eligibility criteria to decide whether someone can get help from them.

- If you get social care support, you will now have a right to request a personal budget if you're not offered one. This is a summary of how much the council thinks your care should cost. This might be useful if you want to pay for your own care.

- If your needs assessment shows you don't qualify for help from the council, they must advise you how the care system works and how to pay for your own care. So if you just need a hand with housework, for example, the council should assist you in finding this.

- You can defer selling your home to pay your care fees until after your death.

- If you're paying for your own care, you can ask the council to ar-



range your services for you. It can only charge you as much as someone whose care they are funding.

- If you're a carer, you have a legal right to a care assessment from the local council. You can also get support services if you qualify for them.

- If you find it difficult to communicate or to understand the issues being discussed, the council must provide an advocate to help you when discussing your care. They will represent your interests if you don't have a friend or relative who can help.

- The council must provide preventative services that could reduce or delay your need for care. For example, intermediate care at home after a hospital stay could help keep you in-

dependent for longer.

Age UK says what we can expect from April 2020 will be:

- There will be a cap on how much you have to spend on your care needs. Anything you or the council spend on your eligible needs will be added up in your care account. Once it reaches £72,000, the council will pay for all your eligible needs. This will exclude your daily living costs, which covers things like your food and accommodation in a care home. The proposed figure of £72,000 for the cap could change by 2020 due to inflation.

- The council can reassess your care needs, even if you pay for your own care. This is because the council works out how much your care should cost to meet your eligible needs, and adds this up. It needs to check every so often that the amount it thinks you should be spending is still right.

- New rules about top-up fees in care homes mean you may be able to pay them yourself. Top-up fees may apply if you move into a care home that costs more than the council can pay.

- If you're not happy about a decision, you have a new right to complain and appeal it, and for this to be independently investigated.

Significantly, the goal posts are also moving in terms of how much in the way of assets an individual can

have to be eligible for support.

As of April 2020, anyone with assets of between £17,000 and £118,500 who meets the eligibility criteria for care will be entitled to some financial support according to a sliding scale.

To put it another way, anyone with less than £118,000 in savings will in future be entitled to at least some financial support to help pay their care costs if they need to enter a care home.

That's a significant change from the current situation which states if your capital (in terms of savings and property) exceeds £23,250 you must pay full fees.

However, of course, with any legislation such as this being delayed for so long, and with Brexit now making the economic stability of the nation far from certain, it would not be beyond the realms of possibility to see all the proposals put forward thus far subject to change or simply scrapped altogether.

■ If in doubt, do not get confused but seek help and advice. Age UK provides plenty of information and practical advice and guidance. Its website is at www.ageuk.org.uk or contact Kent County Council or Medway Council, depending where you live, for help. The authorities websites are at www.kcc.gov.uk or www.medway.gov.uk.

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Dementia: What is it and just what does it do?

DEMENTIA describes different brain disorders that trigger a loss of brain function. These conditions are all usually progressive and eventually severe.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia, affecting 62 per cent of those diagnosed.

Other types of dementia include; vascular dementia affecting 17 per cent of those diagnosed, mixed dementia affecting 10 per cent of those diagnosed.

Symptoms of dementia include memory loss, confusion and problems with speech and understanding. Dementia is a terminal condition.

Who is affected?

■ There are 850,000 people with dementia in the UK, with numbers set to rise to over 1 million by 2025. This will soar to 2 million by 2051.

■ 225,000 will develop dementia this year, that's one every three minutes.

■ 1 in 6 people over the age of 80 have dementia.

■ 70 per cent of people in care

homes have dementia or severe memory problems.

■ There are over 40,000 people under 65 with dementia in the UK.

■ More than 25,000 people from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups in the UK are affected.

How much does it cost?

■ Two thirds of the cost of dementia is paid by people with dementia and their families.

■ Unpaid carers supporting someone with dementia save the economy £11 billion a year.

■ Dementia is one of the main causes of disability later in life, ahead of cancer, cardiovascular disease and stroke. As a country we spend much less on dementia than on these other conditions.

How does the UK compare with other countries?

There are an estimated 35.6 million people living with dementia and the numbers affected will double every 20 years, rising to 115.4 million in 2050.

Another 7.7 million people will develop dementia around the world

every year.

What about treatments and research?

There is no cure for Alzheimer's disease or any other type of dementia. Delaying the onset of dementia by five years would halve the number of deaths from the condition, saving 30,000 lives a year.

Dementia research is desperately underfunded.

For every person living with dementia, the annual cost to the UK economy is over £30,000 and yet only £90 is spent on dementia research each year.

There are not enough researchers and clinicians joining the fight against dementia. Five times fewer researchers choose to work on dementia than on cancer.

Alzheimer's Society is committed to spending at least £150 million over the next decade on dementia research to improve care for people today and find a cure for tomorrow.

This includes £50 million to develop the UK's first dedicated Dementia Research Institute.



DIFFICULT: Brain functions are impacted by onset of dementia

Where can you go for advice and information?

Visit the Alzheimer's Society web-

site at www.alzheimers.org.uk or call its national dementia hotline on 0300 222 1122

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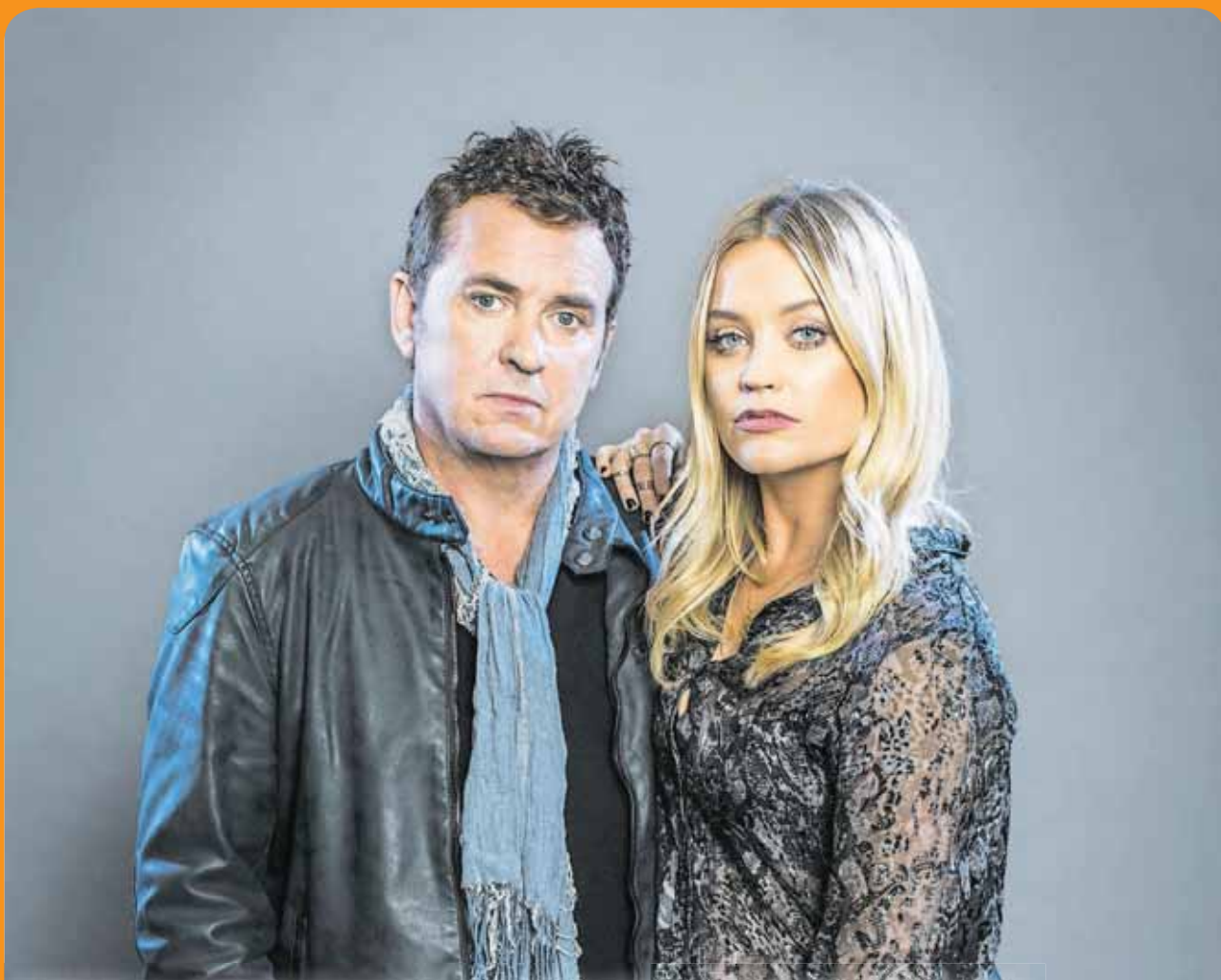
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Dartford



SCARY: The actor moves from the TV to the stage, alongside co-star Laura Whitmore, in this fast-paced and harrowing story

EastEnders' Shane Richie to thrill in psychological drama

He talks to KoS about his love for Dartford and his similarities to his character

KOWN for his role as East End cheeky chap, Alfie Moon, Shane Richie has gone back to the stage in his second role in a Peter James story.

This time Mr Richie plays Det Supt Roy Grace in *Not Dead Enough*, the third of Mr James' novels to be converted to stage.

The storyline begins on the night Brian Bishop murdered his wife, even though he was sixty miles away, asleep in bed. At least that's what he claims. But as Det Supt Roy Grace continues to deal with the mysterious disappearance of his own wife, he starts to dig a little deeper into the chilling murder case and it soon becomes clear that love can be a dangerous thing.

With the show debuting in Dartford, Mr Richie is delighted to be coming back to Kent. He said: "I re-

ally like Kent and I always get out and about when I'm there as I've got loads of friends in the county.

"I particularly like Dartford, because it's only 40 minutes from my house which means I can commute to work."

He was also an avid fan of Peter James' novels before taking on a role in *The Perfect Murder* (the second of his novels to take to the stage) with Jessie Wallace.

"I've always been aware of his work, when you're in and out of airports all the time and they're constantly at the top of the Best Sellers' list, it's hard not to," he says. "We got to know each other at a party of a mutual friend of ours, and he said he'd like to work with me, and I replied saying I'd love to play Roy Grace."

Speaking of the popularity of Mr James' novels, the TV actor says:

"He's a modern Agatha Christie because his novels are like reading a movie. They're always fast-paced, with rich characters and the remarkable thing is they're all based on some fact."

Mr Richie also believes that he shares one trait with his character in *Not Dead Enough*.

"Roy Grace is fairly stubborn when he thinks he's right, and I'm like that in my job – I know what works for me and what doesn't. There'll be times throughout this play when Roy will be really adamant that he's right about something, but the whole audience will think he's wrong. But, of course, he's proved right in the end."

Being in the cast of a psychologically scary theatre show, KoS wanted to know what scares Mr Richie, but the actor claims he is pretty fearless.

"I used to be scared of failure, but I'm not anymore, and I'm not scared of the dark anymore either," he laughs.

"I think you reach a certain age where you're like I can't be scared of that anymore because I've been there, done that, got the T-shirt. Maybe I'm just scared of not taking chances."

When describing the story and show in three words, Mr Richie claimed it's "dark, harrowing, and psychological" but warned that anyone with nervous tendencies should stay away, as it's "the type of show you'll watch through your fingers."

The show is coming to Dartford's Orchard Theatre from January 25 to 28, and Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre from April 10 to 15.

For tickets, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk or marlowetheatre.com

» Email us details of your event to: editorial@kosmedia.co.uk
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LIVELY 53 year old female, young in mind, wants discreet fun, loves gardening, dancing music etc and more. Text only. Mailbox: 5763284

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+. Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3002 Box 419673

JACKIE 56yrs, attractive lady who is lots of fun seeks like-minded gent for nights in, days out and much more. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424491

JANE young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3010 Box: 409715

SUE 60s lady, calling all gents who seek a mature solvent stylish lady, I can wine and dine you, you will have a nice time, call or text me. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424781

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 3018 Box: 413399

JEAN, mature lady, genuine with many hobbies, slim, blonde and attractive. WLTm interesting gent with GSOH, must be cheerful, looks unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424675

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3022 Box 421375

SUE, genuine lady, own home, loves to spoil a man, give me a call or text. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424673

HI Gents, I'm Kelly, a down to earth lady, 35yrs, shapely brunette, seeking someone with GSOH, looks unimportant, any age. ACA, I promise! Tel: 0906 515 3026 Box 423035

NAUGHTY curvy 46yr old lady, outgoing and bubbly with a naughty side and lots of banter. WLTm chap 30+. If you are married even better. ACS. Tel: 0906 515 3014 Box 424543

WANTED gent 50-76 for cosy nights in, good times, call or text me, you won't be sorry. I'm attractive and have lots to offer. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425339

SARAH 39yrs, married, seeking chap for no strings intimate times. Special friendship, mutual respect. Give me a call. Tel: 0906 515 3030 Box 408291

LINDA 48yrs attractive brunette seeks gent for laughter, winning dining. Age unimportant. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425337

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3006 Box 422365

AMANDA, slim blonde, 50s seeks discreet gent for special times, mutually beneficial to us both. Call now. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425327

EILEEN mid 60s seeks gent 50s-60s for friendship, possibly much more. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425341

CORRINE, genuine advertiser seeking adult fun, no time wasters pls. I will respond to all mgs. Text Only. Mailbox: 4035196

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SANDRA, smart, sophisticated lady, young looking 60s, genuine and kind, seeks gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424671

HELEN, mid 50s naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424493

CAROL, mid 50s lady, young at heart, attractive and sexy (50+ I told!) Give me a call if you are a gent with GSOH. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424783

MARY, professional mature lady, loves life, very sociable and fun, seeks gent for good conversation and happy times. All calls and texts answered. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424775

BRUNETTE lady, 70, slim, sophisticated, size 10, kind of like Helen Mirren as a brunette, lives near Tunbridge Wells. WLTm a genuine, hopefully family oriented gentleman, for genuine friendship. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424877

SARAH, mature feminine lady, kind caring but still has a sensual side, hoping to meet like minded, confident, non smoking gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424777

50YRS, old attractive lady. Sheila, caring honest, seeks discreet gent. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422469

SUE, outgoing lady, enjoys life, likes meals, holidays, WLTm mature gentleman to share interests and spend quality time together. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424669

CLARE, 41, attractive, lovely eyes, nice figure, smoker, likes beach walks, socialising, occasional gigs, WLTm a nice gent, any age over 40, for wine and dining, to be my soul mate. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424595

JULIE, 53yrs, tall slim dark haired lady, sociable and fun loving. New to the area so WLTm men friends for fun, maybe more. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424497

ANGELA, 48yrs, seeks male companion for nights out, dining, maybe more. ACA or text me. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424495

PRESENTABLE divorced lady, young 60, many interests, animal lover, seeks outgoing, cheerful, honest, smart looking man, for cultural times. Text only Mailbox: 5576629

ATTRACTION Caribbean lady 58yrs, very jolly and fun seeking gent any age who must love good times. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425323

OCTAVIA, black seductress, 53yrs, waiting to meet you. Pls text me today. Text Only. Mailbox: 4090520

SANDRA, smart, sophisticated lady, young looking 60s, genuine and kind, seeks gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424671

HELEN, mid 50s naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424493

CAROL, mid 50s lady, young at heart, attractive and sexy (50+ I told!) Give me a call if you are a gent with GSOH. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424783

MARY, professional mature lady, loves life, very sociable and fun, seeks gent for good conversation and happy times. All calls and texts answered. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424775

BRUNETTE lady, 70, slim, sophisticated, size 10, kind of like Helen Mirren as a brunette, lives near Tunbridge Wells. WLTm a genuine, hopefully family oriented gentleman, for genuine friendship. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424877

SARAH, mature feminine lady, kind caring but still has a sensual side, hoping to meet like minded, confident, non smoking gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424777

50YRS, old attractive lady. Sheila, caring honest, seeks discreet gent. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422469

WENDY, 44yrs, dark haired beauty with blue eyes and a fab figure. WLTm gent any age, give me a call and I promise to call you back, or text/email. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424339

MELANIE, 49yrs, varied interests, attractive, sensual lady seeks gent any age or status, call, see what happens. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424337

CALLING all Gentlemen! I'm Janet a mature solvent stylish lady, I'm waiting for you to call me so we can wine/dine and have some good times ACA. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424335

HI I'm Angie, attractive petite mid 50s lady. I'm a very active lady, with lots of interests. WLTm chap with GSOH, looks/age unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424333

WIDOW, 62, short, looking for friendship at present, interested? Ha ha got to phone to find out more! Call Jan. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424195

MALE 50 seeks mature, home loving lady, 60 plus who enjoys cosy nights in. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424683

MARTIN trustworthy, warm hearted, loving, reliable male, 45, 6ft, medium build, young at heart, GSOH, seeks female, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424681

CARING 55yr old male, widower, 6ft 3ins, WLTm lady, 40-55 for fun and laughter, maybe happy ever after. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424677

COLIN, 56, 6ft, medium build, clean and tidy with a tidy beard, I'm after some TLC with no strings adult fun. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422359

ANDY, tall attractive male, looking for a naughty female, fun with no strings attached. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424295

MALE, 52, quiet nature, likes sports, cinema, reading, WLTm lady for friendship and maybe romance. East Kent area. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424211

RICHARD, 64, n/s, from Kent, medium build, clean shaven, likes classic cars, days out, meals out, boot fairs, most things, would like to meet a lady for company and to share each others interests. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424207

JOHN, 70, widower, lives in Broadstairs, Kent, slim, fit, active, young at heart, kind, caring and loving, likes country/beach walks, holidays, days out, theatre, eating out, music, animals, WLTm slim, attractive lady, to share interests and nice times together. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424043

LIVELY old boy, OHAC, near sea in Folkestone, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks lady companion/lover, 58-68 yrs. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422621

HELLO my name is Paul, 43, 5ft9, from Sittingbourne in Kent, looking for someone to have some fun with and see where it goes! Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422905

HI I'm Darren, down to earth guy, lives in Kent, likes Marbella, looking for someone special to meet and have a laugh with. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424951

GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421

NICK, mature male, builder, tattoos, plenty of money, looking for discreet meets, no strings in the Kent area. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424787

RETIRED, intelligent, Broadstairs widower, GSOH, medium height and build, seeks slim lady for friendship and companionship initially. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424697

59YR old male, likes country walks, pub lunches, seeks lady for friendship, maybe more. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424685

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TONY black male, 58, 5ft6, med build, n/s, seeking a local mature fun loving female 40/75 in the Chatham/Gillingham area for discreet fun. Text only Mailbox: 5459052

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GAY guy, friendly with a GSOH, likes sport and art, WLTm similar guy for a relationship. Tel: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425563

SIMON, 29yrs, gay curious, seeking older gent for new experiences, must be discreet as I live at home. Text Only: Mailbox: 4196422

Bl male 68 slim looking for similar male for an accommodation. Text only Mailbox: 5585368

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Youth project's Little Shop of Horrors – play your part in show

By Emily

emily.king@archant.co.uk

CALLING all actors, singers, dancers, and technicians, Dartford's Orchard Theatre is looking for you to audition to take part in its summer youth project.

Every year, the Orchard Theatre offers young people between nine and 19-years-old the opportunity to take to the very stage some of theatre's biggest names have performed.

Over 100 young people are selected to come together and work with the theatre's professional creative team to learn, rehearse and perform a musical, all in just two weeks.

Last year's project, Bugsy Malone, was a success and preparations have now begun for this year's chosen show, Little Shop of Horrors.

The horror, comedy, rock musical follows the character Seymour Krelborn and his colleague Audrey who work at Mushnik's Flower Shop wishing that some day they can leave the slums of New York City.



CURTAIN CALL: The show will take place in August after only two weeks of rehearsals

But worried that the shop will close due to lack of customers, they decide to display an unusual plant Seymour bought at a Chinese flower shop.

However, when Audrey II – as the plant was named – begins to die, Seymour accidentally pricks his finger on its thorns and discovers that the plant needs human blood to survive.

Rapidly growing out of control

Audrey II begins to demand more human blood from Seymour, and so he uses the plant to rid his life of people who pose a threat.

Thus causing more problems along the way...

So why not follow in the footsteps of Bill Murray and Steve Martin, when auditions will place on March 12 at the theatre.

The dates of the 2017 Summer Youth Project are July 31 – August 12.

In these two weeks, youngsters will work with the creative team, make new friends and have lots of fun learning, rehearsing and performing.

To apply for an audition place, or to be a part of the technical team, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk and follow the link to the online form.

Completed forms must be returned by March 3.

The Verdict's on stage

STAGE adaptation of The Verdict, with Casualty's Clive Mantle, is coming to Bromley's Churchill Theatre from January 31 to February 4.

For tickets, visit churchill-theatre.co.uk



Sir Peter's famous faces

DARTFORD artist Sir Peter Blake, best known for his work designing the cover of The Beatles' Sgt Pepper album cover, has unveiled his latest commission – a giant collage across the front the Mandarin Oriental in Hyde Park.

The huge work, Our Fans, is a collage of 100 famous faces who've stayed at the hotel.

This gig will be Madness

Madness are coming to Maidstone's Kent County Showground for a gig on August 12.

To purchase tickets, visit madness.co.uk, madnessinkent.com or southeastlive.co.uk



She'll leave you Frazzled

COMEDIAN Ruby Wax is returning to the stage with her show Frazzled, and the much loved author and campaigner is bringing the show to Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on May 10.

Ms Wax is the writer of TV shows including script editor of Absolutely Fabulous.

For tickets, visit assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk

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Week ending January 22, 2017 **35**

Bestival's family rave

DREAMLAND Margate has announced that it will be a host venue for Camp Bestival's Big Fish Little Fish tour, a family festival on April 8.

Visit dreamland.co.uk for tickets.



Model Railway exhibition

THE ERITH Model Railway Society's annual model railway exhibition, one of South East England's largest shows, returns on January 28 at The Longfield Academy, Main Road, Longfield, DA3 7PH.

There will be hot and cold drinks available and free parking. Tickets, on the door.

National Theatre Live

FOLKESTONE Quarterhouse has announced that it will be adding National Theatre live broadcasts to its spring listings.

For information on what's on and when, visit quarterhouse.co.uk



Margate Wonderland

DREAMLAND has announced the headliners for its Margate Wonderland taking place on May 28.

Acts include The Kills, Little Barrie, Broken Hands, and Electric Child House.

For more information and tickets, visit dreamland.co.uk

Elbow announced to headline Forest Live

By Emily King

emily.king@archant.co.uk

ELBOW have announced they will play a one-off gig in Tunbridge Wells this summer as part of Forest Live, a concert series presented by the Forestry Commission.

Since the band's debut album, 2001's *Asleep At The Back*, their stature has grown with subsequent releases such as *Cast of Thousands*, *Leaders Of The Free World*, *The Seldom Seen Kid*, *Build A Rocket Boys* and 2014's *The Take Off And Landing Of Everything* that debuted at the top of the UK charts.

Front man Guy Garvey's story-telling lyrics have honed their unique identity and sound to establish the band a passionate fan base and critical acclaim on their musical journey including a BRIT award for Best British Band.

Stand-out gigs for Elbow include Glastonbury Festival's sunset slot with a trio of sets on the Pyramid Stage, taking part in the closing ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games performing their classic



track *One Day Like This*, and recreating their Mercury Prize winning album, *The Seldom Seen Kid* with the BBC Concert Orchestra from the world famous Abbey Road Studio One.

The band's seventh studio album *Little Fictions* will be released on February 3.

Forest Live is a programme organised by the Forestry Commission which aims to bring forests to new audiences. Income generated from ticket sales is spent on protecting, improving and

expanding forests and woodlands.

Over Forest Live's 16 years history, money raised has contributed to projects such as wildlife conservation, and making improvements for visitors.

Elbow's woodland concert will be coming to Bedgebury Pinetum on June 17.

Tickets cost £41.50 and are available from 9am on January 20.

Call 03000 680400 or visit forestry.gov.uk/music to buy or for more information.



UNIQUE: Lead singer Guy Garvey



HEADLINER: Rick Astley has also been announced to play



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Tom Daley swaps diving boards for an apron

The 22-year-old Olympic diver is releasing a healthy eating cookbook – Tom's Daily Plan...

WHEN you picture Tom Daley, he's probably in pair of Speedos or a Team GB tracksuit – not an apron. But the Olympic diver is showing off his culinary skills in a new healthy eating cookbook, Tom's Daily Plan.

"One of the things people don't necessarily know about me is I enjoy cooking. I've always been a lover of food – if I'm not diving or sleeping, I'm eating," says the 22-year-old, laughing.

"I live my life for the next meal. I'm one of those people who thinks, 'I've just finished lunch, OK what's for dinner?'"

"In my case, food is fuel," adds the athlete, "so I have to make sure I'm

eating the right things to get the best out of myself every day."

Along with simple workouts and fitness tips, the book is stuffed full of mouthwatering recipes that are healthy but actually hearty too, including his mum Debbie's Sunday Lunch and Sausage Casserole, and California-born fiancée Dustin Lance Black's Scotch Eggs.

Daley's lifelong love of food started with baking sessions at his nan and granddad's.

"I remember me and my brothers all there with the bowl, arguing over who got to lick the spoon! As I got older, I wanted to take more of a role in the kitchen, so my grandma taught me how to cook vegetable soups and the broccoli pasta bake that's in the



FOODIE: Tom Daley

book. That's one of the first things I learnt to make."

He's had cooking lessons at Ashburton Cookery School in Devon, and likes to unwind in the kitchen after a day's training by cooking for his Oscar-winning screenwriter fiancée Black, at the flat they share near London's Borough Market.

"I make him breakfast every single morning and then in the evenings, because the way the time difference works for him when he's in the UK, everyone [in the US] starts waking up at about five o'clock, six o'clock, so he's always on the phone sorting out his work stuff at that time when I'm cooking."

"But we do share it [cooking duties] quite often and he's really, really good

on the barbecue. In the summer, we barbecue three times a week, just to cook chicken and marinated stuff; he does a good southern fried chicken thing. So some of his food isn't the healthiest..." he admits with a laugh.

Daley, who won bronze medals at London 2012 and in Rio last summer, and trains for up to five hours a day, admits he has sweet tooth, but gets around it by steering clear of "the sugar train".

"As soon as you get on it in the mornings, if you have a sugary cereal or breakfast, then by about 11 o'clock, you think, 'Oh I need something else to get a bit of sugar', and once you've had that, you want more and more and more."

The Matt Monroe Story

THE Matt Monroe Story is coming to Bromley's Churchill Theatre on February 24, Maidstone's Hazlitt Theatre on March 9, and Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall on April 29.

He was first to sing on a James Bond film and contributed the score of The Italian Job.

For tickets, visit churchilltheatre.co.uk, parkwoodtheatres.co.uk/hazlitt-theatre, and ticketmaster.co.uk

BGT dons Dreamcoat

BRITAIN'S GOT TALENT's Lucy Kay will return as the narrator in the upcoming production of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, starring X Factor winner Joe McElderry, from January 24.

Ms Kay scored her first number one album in 2014, after her debut Fantasia shot straight to the top of the Classical Album Chart.

For tickets, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk

Silver singers return

THE SOLID SILVER 60S SHOW is coming to Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall on April 4, and Dartford's Orchard Theatre on April 21.

Playing host to Bobby Vee, Billy J Kramer, Gerry and The Pacemakers, and The Troggs, the show is back for a record breaking 32nd year.

For tickets, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk and ticketmaster.co.uk

The Bob Dylan Story

A SHOW celebrating the life and career of rock-legend and Nobel Peace Prize winner Bob Dylan is coming to Chatham's Central Theatre on February 11.

The Bob Dylan Story recreates the living legend's classic hits, from The Times They Are A-Changin', Blowin' In The Wind and Mr Tambourine Man, through to Like A Rolling Stone, and Knockin' On Heaven's Door.

For tickets, visit tickets.medway.gov.uk



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The best places to visit for 2017?

Remedy January blues by planning your holidays.
SARAH MARSHALL suggests four on trend ideas

Peru

Best for... history

Machu Picchu has long been Peru's greatest tourist attraction, but there are many more lost cities. A new cable car in the north will improve access to Kuelap, a sacred site built by the Chachapoyas from the 6th century. Further south, the city of Arequipa, home to mummified Inca princess

Juanita, will enjoy greater exposure from May when Belmond launch a luxury train journey ending in Cusco. The two-night trip on the Andean Explorer sleeper train includes a stop at 3,800m-high Lake Titicaca. Visit www.belmond.com

Finland

Best for... short haul

Next December, Finland celebrates

100 years of independence with events throughout 2017.

The most exciting project is the designation of new national park Hossa. Hike trails, canoe waterways, or seek out Stone Age rock paintings. Overnight in a cabin or embrace the wilderness by camping; visit www.nationalparks.fi/en/hossavisitorcentre

Paphos, Cyprus

Best for... culture

Offset hours on a sunlounger by clocking up cultural pursuits in 2017's balmy European Capital of Culture.

300 events will be staged against a backdrop of Hellenistic tombs and Roman fortresses in the birthplace of ancient goddess Aphrodite.

Try open-air concerts in the medieval Castle Square, cinema screenings on the beach, dance shows in the street and an art exhibition along the Akamas Peninsula. For more details, visit www.pafos2017.eu

Madagascar

Best for... wildlife

Visit the charismatic lemur and enjoy the newly improved infrastructure

and accommodation on the island.

Managed by Norman Carr Safaris, the new Miavana resort sits on Nosy Ankao, part of a private five-island archipelago. Visit between June and November to spot humpback whales. See www.timeandtideafrica.com/miavana (it is due to open early 2017).

A more economical option is G Adventures' new eight-day Baobab & Tsingy Explorer trip to the central region's spiky rock formations. The trip costs from £999pp, excluding flights; visit www.gadventures.com



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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Don't be bullish about road death

THE devastation to people's lives and unbearable grief caused by death of loved ones on the roads is hardly the subject for aggressively expressed statistics and vitriolic slurs on anyone who dares to challenge the motorist's right to speed [KoS, letters, last two weeks].

The moderate improvements to the Sheppey Crossing will only be effective if the reduced speed limit is kept.

I would agree with Terry Hudson, speeding in the wrong places causes accidents, not speed alone, but the question persists – how do we reduce the carnage?

DR Hedges,
Chatham

Accidents will happen in cars

READERS Wilkins-Oppler and Colin Packman [KoS, letters, last week] should be reminded of the difference between 'speeding', which just means somebody driving faster than the posted speed limit and 'driving too fast for conditions' which is the cause of most 'speeding' accidents.

Of course, the faster you hit something or somebody the more damage it will cause, but better to not hit something in the first place by taking more care.

By indiscriminately slowing everybody down to farm tractor speeds, does not meet people's journey time expectations.

One can always promote the negative side to anything, but one has to look at the overwhelming positives to society speed brings.

The 'speed' of the first railways, allowed people to travel like the previous generations could not have envisaged and now cars can do the same, but are not handicapped by fixed routes or timetables.

According to the Department for Transport they quote an annual figure of around 311 billion vehicle miles per year – the last planet in the solar system is Neptune, which at its closest is a mere 2.7 billion miles.

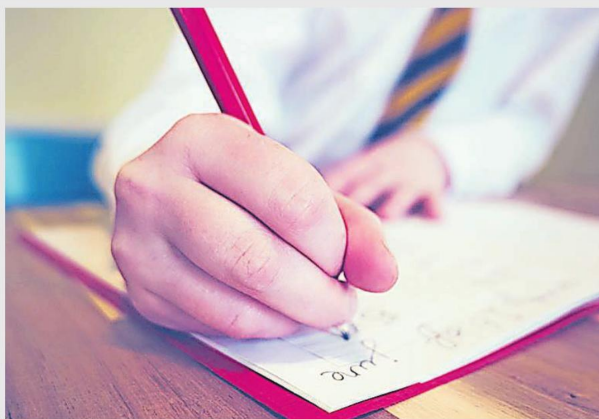
So sadly there will be a few accidents.

Terry Hudson,
Whitstable

Liberal approach has changed

GIVEN the comments I have made in the past it might surprise the editor [KoS, editorial, last week] to know that I agree with much of what he says about the need for reason and balance in political dialogue, and the need for liberal views as, in the past, true

LETTER OF THE WEEK



You can't rubbish it all for genuine debate

SO Colin Bullen [KoS, letters, last week] continues to ignore all evidence regarding the divisiveness of grammar schools as he attempts to support their expansion.

Grammars, along with such public schools as Eton and Harrow et al, are one of the causes of the increasing wealth gaps in our society in my view, and both need to be scrapped in favour of a fully comprehensive system.

Indeed we now see a 129 per cent gap between boardroom pay and ordinary incomes and yet recent studies have suggested that overall productivity among those at the top hasn't increased. This while those at the bottom become ever more shoved into the very precarious 'gig economy' and other low paid sectors.

Elsewhere he, as usual, derides the EU as a dictatorship conveniently ignoring the fact commission proposals have to be passed by elected MEPs and then also by elected national governments with Britain using its 'veto' more than most.

Then he moans about supposed 'thought police' which seems to me to imply that being bigoted in some way is acceptable; but then I do not recall his answering my call to unreservedly condemn the sustained rise in hate-crimes since the EU vote nor acting against it as I have done, even long before such, by being on the Independent Police Advisory Groups, and their predecessors, for instance.

Lastly, he again tries, without any evidence as usual, to deny man-made climate change.

Perhaps he's still unaware that 14 of the last 15 years have been the warmest on record; levels of CO2 have now reached 400 parts per million worldwide, the highest for 3m years.

All such info is readily available from various reputable websites and magazines, so I suggest he looks it up along with info on all of the above instead, perhaps, of looking only on so-called 'post-truth' sites?

Ray Duff
Folkestone

adherents to such principles were responsible for righting many social ills and advancing the cause of democracy.

Ending the slave trade, extending the franchise, placing democratic rights above property, advancing the cause of workers, providing a decent education for all and creating the welfare state were among the results of their efforts.

The problem is that now those who most vociferously lay claim to being their heirs should actually be among the most illiberal, reactionary and undemocratic in our society.

They claim to care about the rights of ordinary working people but

ensure that weak penal policies are in place, that make it unsafe for the latter to walk in their own streets, while they themselves are safe in their upmarket enclaves.

In the field of education, bright children are to be denied, in the name of supposedly progressive liberal policies, the right to the best education, by achieving grammar school places on their own merits, although the pious liberals send their own children to expensive private schools.

In the political field they have been the most vocal in support of the European Union, a backward looking, reactionary and undemo-

cratic organisation, which a true liberal would reject out of hand, but which the new breed have elevated to the status of a secular religion. They have the effrontery to describe those who oppose this monster as xenophobes, bigots and reactionaries when, in reality, the latter are seeking to defend democracy and freedom against a rapacious political and bureaucratic class.

Those of us who are truly liberal in the sense that we seek a democratic society, and a decent life for everyone, should not allow these people to claim the moral high ground as freedom loving progressives, which they most certainly are not, while accepting categorisation for ourselves as being right wing and backward looking.

Colin Bullen,
Tonbridge

Liberal elite want a nanny state

WELL said Colin Bullen about the PC liberal elite and grammar schools [KoS, letters, last week].

My parents struggled after the war, but thanks to the 11-plus I ended up at Cray Valley Technical School, rubbing shoulders with those who'd paid, eventually to become an electronics engineer. Something that would have been denied to me and my employers by the dogmatised PC liberal elite.

They'd expect me to know my place.

The PC liberal elite have tried to create their 'nanny state', where they know best and we are squeezed into identical boxes tailored to their design. It's been a catastrophic failure.

Phil Granger,
West Malling

Rhino horn is a worrying matter

WITH regard your article last week on the sale of two carved antique rhino horn cups, you may be aware of the serious poaching crisis facing rhinos at the moment. You may also know that, where antiques are concerned, it is illegal to trade in any rhino horn carved after June 1947.

There are efforts being made across the world to stem all aspects of trade in rhino horn in order to save these iconic animals from extinction.

It is very disappointing to see the sale reported in a way which seems to congratulate everyone involved, when in fact this attitude to selling antique rhino horn is now, I'm afraid, very much part of the problem, not the solution.

Sue Brace,
via email

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- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.

- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to East

people living in the county.

9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.

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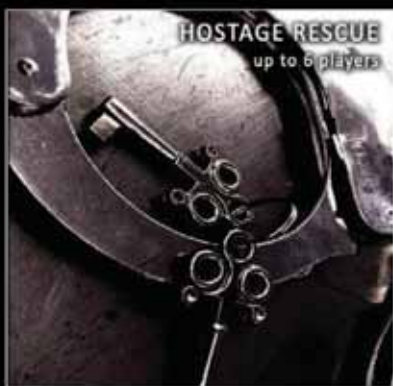
Dog walking in the fog, Challock
by **Victoria Tythe,**
from **Ashford**

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Chatsworth Hotel, Worthing

31 March, 2017 • Quote: WG3-3-KOS

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10 & 17 November, 2017 • Quote: CP11-1/2-KOS

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November 17 entertainment features The Barron Knights, The Swinging Blue Jeans, Roy Carter and The New Allstars.

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11 August, 2017 - Quote: IM8-KOS

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5 December, 2017 - Quote SP12-KOS

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By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

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motoring reviews in...

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CROSSOVER FOUNDER: the Qashqai



GOING SOON: the current Juke is expected to be replaced later in 2107

ELECTRIC POWER: the Leaf



Micra-managing supermini sales

BRAND UPDATE: Japanese brand reckons it can recharge its supermini credentials when the fifth-generation Micra goes on sale in March...

UNTIL the Qashqai arrived in 2007 and created the crossover sector, Nissan's best known UK model was the Micra supermini.

But it's been all downhill for the brand's most junior car since then: the current contender was designed to please as many global markets as possible, a move guaranteed to create a jack-of-all-trades yet fail to please the discerning drivers of Europe and the UK.

But the Japanese brand believes it can Micra-manage a change in perceptions when a more dynamic fifth-generation car arrives in March.

Longer, wider and lower than ever before, the wedge-like profile makes it appear racier and Nissan is also said to have delivered handling to match the stance, while still offering a comfortable ride.

Cabin quality, design and appeal is also pitched higher, though it needed to be in an increasingly cutthroat market sector, soon to be assailed by an all-new version of the UK's long term best seller, the Ford Fiesta.

Petrol and diesel Micra options will be offered, but expect the petrol turbo to be the private market's favourite.

Good as this new Micra may well be though, Nissan's bread and butter business should remain in the sector it started, crossovers. The



SET TO CHANGE:
the current Micra
supermini

Qashqai itself was the UK's fifth best-selling car last year and was aided and abetted by its baby brother, the Juke – a second generation replacement is the other Nissan newcomer tipped for this year.

The Nissan crossover family has a further member: the X-Trail flagship which, over several generations, has evolved from would-be

off-roader to high quality SUV-style car, deserving mention alongside premium brand contenders.

Other Nissan stars include the Navara – one of the most popular pick-up buys in the UK and available with two and four-door cabs – the elegant Pulsar family hatchback, and the innovative Leaf all-electric car.



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*All-New Scénic payment based on £7,606 deposit, 24 monthly payments of £249, optional final payment £8,963. Finance provided by Renault Finance, PO Box 149, Watford WD17 1FJ. Subject to status. Indemnities may be required. UK residents only (excluding the Channel Islands). Over 18s. Terms and conditions apply. Offers based on 6,000 miles per annum, excess mileage 8p per mile inc VAT. Finance available on selected new vehicles when ordered and registered by 31 March 2017. Car shown with optional metallic paint an extra £545.

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Book a test drive

Peugeot 3008 swings towards SUV

Its predecessor looked more like a chunky MPV; this time there is no mistaking the 3008's trendy SUV image writes **Steve Loader...**

PEUGEOT would privately admit that its first response to the Nissan Qashqai crossover, edged towards the MPV rather than SUV sector.

No such mistake has been made with the second generation 3008: more elegant and trendy SUV rather than anything else, and a far cry from the rather frumpy original and its egg crate grille.

The upmarket look and feel aligns with Peugeot's market ambitions, further highlighted by GT and GT Line flagship models being offered in the eye-catching and racy vertical 'Coupe Franche' two-tone paint job, debuted on the 308 GTi.

Versatility is also better: at 4.45 metres, it's 8cm longer – with a longer wheelbase – boosting passenger and luggage space while remaining more compact than rivals.

It has one of the segment's largest and most versatile load capacities: the 520-litre boot space (under the luggage cover) is almost 90 bigger than before and can be expanded to a fully flat 1,580-litre load floor.

The slight gain in size also comes without a weight penalty: modern construction techniques have pared as much as 100 kilos from the new



generation models – more than the 84 kilos of the average UK male.

This enabled Peugeot to make the car more agile and fuel efficient than the outgoing 3008. It certainly has a flatter cornering stance and responds well to steering inputs through the small and sporty squared off wheel.

Any Peugeot claims to have

're-invented the wheel' should be discounted though: the otherwise awful Austin Allegro pioneered this feature in the 1970s.

I was also pleased to see that high spec models retain the old 3008's GripControl option.

This clever traction control on the front driving wheels enables the



3008 to act like a 4x4 in most situations ordinary drivers will encounter, though the 22cm ground clearance is not in the off-roader league. It also saves all the weight and expense of a full 4x4 system.

And while the 3008 driving experience is much improved, this has not come at the expense of ride

Peugeot 3008 GT Line BlueHDi 120

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Price: | from £27,345 |
| Driving appeal: | ★★★★ |
| Image: | ★★★★ |
| Space: | ★★★★ |
| Value: | ★★★★ |
| Running costs: | ★★★★ |
| How green?: | ★★★★ |
| Best rival: | SEAT Ateca |

quality, which is high for this class.

The interior is smart, continuing a Peugeot trend, highlighted by an eight-inch touchscreen, augmented with distinctive 'piano-keys' to input some commands – sounds like Peugeot has listened to previous criticism from owners about everything having to be routed through a screen.

Prices start from £20,395, which might look high, but closer inspection of the equipment list, classy looks and finish, show the 3008 is great value.

As ever with Peugeot, there is good choice in petrol and diesels too, plus auto options and a hybrid likely later. My favourite of those driven was the upmarket 1.6-litre 120PS (118bhp) GT Line diesel manual – a refined and economical (65.7mpg combined) all-rounder.



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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES



**A20 TRUNK ROAD
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TEMPORARY TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS**

Notice is hereby given that Highways England Company Limited(a) has made an Order on the A20 Trunk Road in County of Kent, under section14(1) (a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 because works are proposed to be executed on the road.

The effect of the Order will be to authorise the overnight closure of the slip roads leading to and from both carriageways of the A20 at the Alkham Valley Interchange (A260) and Courtwood Interchange (B2011). These measures will be in the interests of road safety to enable contractors to undertake cyclic maintenance and/or urgent repair work.

It is expected that the work will take place for approximately two nights for each slip road every two months between 20:00 and 05:00 (maximum period).

The Order will come into force on 21 January 2017 and have a maximum duration of twelve months.

During the closures above, traffic will be diverted via other junctions of the A20.

The slip road closures and diversion routes will be clearly indicated by traffic signs throughout the works periods.

M Taylor, an Official of Highways England Co Ltd.
Ref: HA/A20/35/3/2286

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Notice is hereby given that
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for the premises **Storage Unit GA32-300** situated at **Ashford Self Storage, Unit 2, Brunswick Road, Ashford, Kent. TN23 1EL**

A register of licensing applications can be viewed at the Licensing Section, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL 01233 331111 by appointment.

Any person wishing to submit representations to this application must give notice in writing to the address shown above, giving in detail the grounds of objection by:

09/02/2017

Dated this 12/01/2017

Signed: **A Murphy**

The Council will not entertain representations where the writer requests that his identity remains anonymous. Copies of all representations will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Panel and will therefore pass into the public domain. Representations must relate to one or more of the four Licensing Objectives: **THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND DISORDER, PUBLIC SAFETY, THE PREVENTION OF PUBLIC NUISANCE AND THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM HARM.**

It is an offence, liable on conviction to a fine up to level 5 on the standard scale (£5000), under Section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003 to make a false statement in or in connection with this application.

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We require the following staff to join our West Heath team:

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If you would like to find out more about our school, plus application form and JD please visit www.westheathschool.com or contact lynne.mcgrath@westheathschool.com if you have any questions.

Closing date for applications is 27th January 2017.

Working at West Heath School involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable groups including children, and as such is a "Regulated Activity".

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Applicants must be willing to undergo safeguarding screening appropriate to the post.

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Five county stars in hockey call-up

Holcombe and Canterbury ladies feature in 33-woman squad

Hockey

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

A 33-WOMAN squad announced this week to lead England and Great Britain into the next Olympic cycle features five players from Kent.

Head coach Danny Kerry has selected the players he wants to lay the foundations for Great Britain's defence of their gold medal from Rio at the next Games in Tokyo in 2020.

Some 15 of the squad are joining the central programme for the first time, marking a significant injection of new blood to an already hugely successful squad, while 12 of the 19 athletes who flew to Rio will once again strive for success.

Holcombe's Sarah Jones is one of the new players to join the squad, while there are also places for her team mates Shona McCallin, Nic White and Ellie Walton as well as Canterbury's Grace Balsdon.

Maddie Hinch, who proved the heroine in the famous victory over the Netherlands in the summer, was formerly of Holcombe but moved to SCHC last year.

Bosses are hoping to drive further interest in the sport across the country with a home World Cup in London next summer and, before that, a clash between England and the Netherlands at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park on June 11.

Kerry said: "Following a number of months of assessment within our centralised programme we have selected a new initial squad for the Tokyo cycle.

"We have, I feel, a good depth of skilful, committed, smart, and ath-



CHAMPIONS: Great Britain's Olympic gold medal-winning team

Pictures: FRANK UIJLENBROEK

letic athletes who are eager to learn, develop and build on the legacy and momentum of the Rio Olympic cycle.

"As part of this group we have also retained an excellent core from the previous cycle, who no doubt will play a key role in passing on the values and behaviours that drive performance whilst evolving the cul-

ture for the coming cycle.

"On a personal level I am excited about the potential that this group, allied to our excellent National Lottery funded programme at Bisham Abbey, holds.

"The challenges of this cycle are as clear, significant and exciting as ever."

Academy scholar picked for West Indies tour

Cricket

A BECKENHAM teenager from Kent Cricket's academy has been named in the club's 17-man squad for a tour of the West Indies.

Ollie Robinson, an 18-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman, will travel to the Caribbean as cover for Kent gloveman Adam Rouse with Sam Billings in India on England duty.

Robinson scored 251 for Kent Under 17s against Sussex at Polo Farm last summer and has played six times for Kent's second XI.

The right-hander, who plays club cricket with Alex Blake at Beckenham, is currently studying for his A-Levels and is looking forward to the trip.

"I can't wait, I'm absolutely



HOME: Spitfire Ground

delighted to be on the trip," Robinson said.

"Going from training with the

academy to the first team is a big step and will be a good challenge.

"I went away with the academy to Dubai last year which was a great experience and I put a lot of my success down to that trip.

"The academy has helped me develop a lot of life skills as well as my cricket and I hope to learn as much as I can from the coaches and players."

The full Kent squad for the West Indies Regional Super50 in Antigua is as follows: Adam Ball, Daniel Bell-Drummond, Hugh Bernard, Alex Blake, Matt Coles, Sean Dickson, Will Gidman, Calum Haggett, Matt Hunn, Sam Northeast (c), Imran Qayyum, Adam Riley, Ollie Robinson (wk), Adam Rouse (wk), Darren Stevens, Ivan Thomas, James Tredwell.

Sport Shorts

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Loftus-Cheek receives Chelsea boss backing

CHELSEA boss Antonio Conte has put his faith in Swanley-born midfielder Ruben Loftus-Cheek to replace Oscar following the Brazilian's big-money move to China.

Oscar moved from Stamford Bridge to Shanghai SIPG earlier in the month in a reported £60m deal worth some £500,000 a week.

Though not a regular in the league leaders' line-up, many were wondering if Conte would look to replace Oscar in the January transfer window.

However, following an impressive cameo in the Blues' 3-0 win over reigning Premier League champions Leicester City at the King Power last weekend, the Italian appears to be backing Loftus-Cheek, who attended High Firs Primary and then Orchards Academy, to step up and play a bigger role for the title favourites in the second half of the season.

"I trust all my players, Ruben is a player with great quality," he said.

"Now I think after Oscar left he could have the right space to show me and the club his potential."



BOOST: Ruben Loftus-Cheek



PRIESTFIELD: Goalkeeper Tomas Holy joined the Gills ranks this week

Goalie Holy becomes Pennock's Czech mate

CZECH goalkeeper Tomas Holy has become Ady Pennock's first signing as Gillingham head coach after putting pen to paper on a two-and-a-half-year contract at Priestfield.

The 25-year-old came through the ranks at his home country's most famous club, AC Sparta Prague, and impressed Pennock during a week-long trial with the club at the start of January.

A huge presence at six-foot-nine, Holy was promoted to the Sparta first team in the summer of 2012 and played 12 games for the club in between loan moves before a number of short spells across the Czech Republic, for whom he has been capped at under-16, under-17 and under-18 level.

"It has always been a dream of mine to play in England," he said.

Gemili tribute to team-mates

DARTFORD sprinter Adam Gemili has paid tribute to two of his team-mates who are facing career-ending injuries following a motor-bike crash.

James Ellington and Nigel Levine remain in hospital in Tenerife after reportedly both being hit by a car driving on the wrong side of the road.

Their injuries are not life-threat-

ening but there are fears about their ability to compete again at the highest level, with Ellington already needing surgery on a broken leg.

Gemili, who has regularly lined up alongside both sprinters and was the Team GB athletics captain in Rio last summer, asked fans in a tweet to "keep a space in your prayers", adding: "absolutely gutted to hear this news. Stay strong guys."

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